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OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2000, NO. 103

JOHN PAUL II, INTELLECTUAL
DAMON LINKER

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CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

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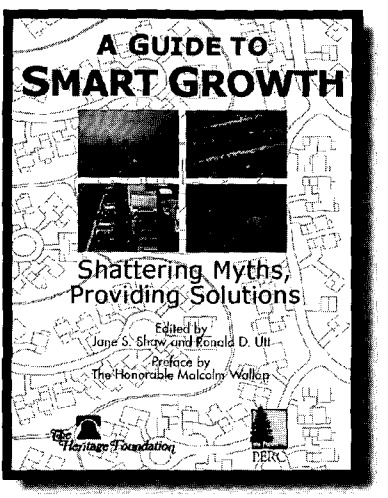

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John Paul II, Intellectual

By DAMON LINKER

AS THE SPIRITUAL LEADER to almost a billion Roman Catholics for the past 22 years, Pope John Paul II has stood astride the world stage as few others. But the magnitude of his influence is not just a function of the numbers of his followers. As George Weigel argued in *The Final Revolution: The Resistance Church and the Collapse of Communism* (Oxford, 1992), the current pope played a greater role in defeating communism in Central and Eastern Europe than any figure besides, perhaps, Ronald Reagan. This fact is all the more remarkable since, unlike his premodern predecessors in the papacy, the current pontiff commands no armies and thus can neither impress nor intimidate his opponents with military might. Unlike Reagan, then, John Paul's role in world history is unambiguously a result not of weapons and the threat of warfare, but of words and ideas.

In a battle fought with argument and rhetoric, most contemporary statesmen would find themselves defenseless against the current pope. After all, here is a world leader who holds two Ph.D.s (in philosophy and sacred theology) and is fluent in virtually every language of the West. And although Karol Wojtyla was an accomplished author long before he was elected to be the 263rd successor to St. Peter in 1978, he has, if anything, become more prolific in the intervening years. Since 1979, he has produced no less than 13 book-length encyclicals, as well as countless speeches, letters, and other public pronouncements, on subjects ranging from the moral foundation of human rights to the strengths and weaknesses of capitalism as an economic

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Damon Linker's essays and reviews have appeared in National Review *and the* Wall Street Journal *as well as* Policy Review.

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and social system. One need not be a Catholic to recognize and admire the formidable power of John Paul's intellect.

And yet, strangely, the pope's considerable intellectual contribution to our times is far from being widely recognized. In the U.S., at least, only conservative Catholics and their liberal antagonists take regular note of John Paul's writings — the former first and foremost because of religiously-inspired veneration, the latter out of contempt for what they take to be his indefensible moral conservatism and inegalitarianism. Aside from Michael Novak's acclaimed writings on the subject, Weigel's magisterial 1999 biography of John Paul, *Witness to Hope* (Cliff Street Books), is the greatest work to emerge from the first group. At 1,000 pages, the book attains a level of thoroughness unlikely to be matched for some time. Like most authorized biographies, its approach to its subject is largely admiring; this in turn leaves room for a more exhaustive critical assessment of the pope and his ideas. As for the liberal Vatican-watchers, Garry Wills's recent book, *Papal Sin* (Doubleday, 2000), is particularly noteworthy, both for its venom and for the transparency of the author's theological-political agenda. Reading his book, one gets the sense that Wills would be satisfied with nothing less than the wholesale transformation of Catholicism into Unitarianism — and that his indignation at the Papacy arises above all from its resistance to such a transformation.

Strangely, the pope's considerable intellectual contribution to our times is far from being widely recognized.

As for the rest of us, the pope's *ideas* are greeted largely with indifference (in vivid contrast to the considerable attention the media pay to his *actions* — for example, his recent and much heralded visit to Israel). The reason for this neglect is far from clear. Maybe it arises from the anti-intellectualism in American life that Richard Hofstadter noted some years ago; if so, our lack of interest in the pope would be little more than an instance of our indifference to the life of the mind more generally. Or perhaps, instead, it has its roots in very old American worries about "sectarianism" — that is, in suspicions about Catholicism's presumption to speak for all Christians and its history of seeking a very public role for religion. Many Americans seem to attribute the remarkable degree of religious freedom and pluralism in their country to the rejection of both opinions; apparently it is democratic bad taste for one sect to consider itself superior to others, and, as its corollary, for such a religion to make public pronouncements intended to apply to all. The current pope, one might conclude, ends up perpetuating these old illiberal errors by seeking to engage in intellectual disputation about political issues. Far from being a defect, then, choosing to ignore him might seem to be a sound course of action for a public-spirited citizen of a nation concerned for the fate of liberty.

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But whatever the ultimate cause of our reluctance to engage — or even acknowledge — John Paul's intellectual contribution to our times, we are clearly the ones who lose out by turning a deaf ear to what he has to say. To begin with, like the best of his predecessors in the Catholic tradition, he bases many of his views on rational arguments accessible to all human beings, Catholic or not, Christian or not. This is remarkable in itself. For much of the Church's history, popes have been far more interested in taking part in political intrigue on the Italian peninsula than with fostering discussion and debate within (let alone outside of) the Christian world. To the extent that the spirit of inquiry flourished within Christendom, it was found in provincial universities and monasteries, not in Rome. Although the Papacy began to seek a greater public role for itself with Pope Benedict XIV's publication of the first modern encyclical in 1740, its pronouncements attained a level of intellectual seriousness only rarely, arguably reaching a pre-1978 peak with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* of 1891.

John Paul exhibits considerably greater intellectual ambition than many of his predecessors.

But even compared with this classic document or the frequently impressive policy declarations of Pope Pius XII (1939–1958) and Pope John XXIII (1958–1963), John Paul's writings stand apart. Unlike the explicitly antimodern popes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for instance, John Paul is thoroughly conversant in and respectful of much of modern culture, including those aspects of it with which he profoundly disagrees. In this, he exhibits considerably greater intellectual ambition than many of his predecessors, as well as greater curiosity and tolerance. Just as to this day the arguments of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas engage readers of all faiths — and even those of no faith — so John Paul intends his writings to be studied, disputed, accepted, and rejected on their own merits, not because of his sacerdotal authority. He is interested above all in dialogue and disputation, not in issuing infallible edicts from on high.

Of course, none of this is meant to portray John Paul as anything other than the demanding leader of an otherworldly religion. His open-mindedness and tolerance certainly have their limits, as one would expect. But, perhaps surprisingly, it is above all this very steadfastness — his insistence on grounding his arguments in a holistic view of human life — that makes his writings worth taking seriously today. For ours is an age in which specialization has come to take the place of comprehensive reflection on the human condition. From software programmers to public policy intellectuals, we live our lives focused on details, and we treat problem-solving as the highest virtue. Even our philosophers — those traditionally charged with raising the most fundamental questions of human life — devote themselves to academic

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minutiae or bend over backward to demonstrate the practicality of their endeavors as professional "ethicists." While John Paul does his best to master the facts and remain informed on the subjects about which he writes, he differs from many of us in never allowing himself to get lost in the particulars or losing sight of the larger picture. We may not all agree with every element of his account of that picture, but in placing his views about the political and economic parts of our lives where they belong — in the context of his views about human life as a whole — his work attains a scope, depth, and profundity rarely reached (or even attempted) by intellectuals in our time.

The surface of things

If the greatest strength of John Paul's work is its comprehensiveness, this quality also contributes to the considerable challenge it poses to contemporary sensibilities. We are, for example, accustomed to being understood and analyzed in the light of the modern sciences. Indeed, television news magazines, best-selling books, and the morning newspapers regularly and enthusiastically report on the latest breakthroughs in the attempt to further scientific knowledge of mankind. While granting science its place, the pope breaks from this currently fashionable trend by denying that human beings can be adequately understood using scientific terms. To take a few examples from recent headlines, cracking the human genome might help us to predict our susceptibility to certain diseases, but it won't tell us anything about the meaning of our ever-longer and healthier lives. Likewise, trying to model the human mind on a computer might teach us how the brain performs certain tasks, but it does not bring us any closer to probing the mysteries of consciousness. And perhaps most tellingly, political scientists might be able to teach us something about politics by assuming that political actors are primarily motivated by a desire to get themselves elected and then re-elected, but they can tell us nothing about why winning and losing matters so profoundly to the politician — or why understanding politics matters so very much to the political scientist himself. Each of these sciences reveals an aspect of humanity but fails to grasp the whole.

Rejecting science as a means to truth might sound odd or even dangerously dogmatic to us, but continental European philosophy has a long tradition of searching for ways to capture the holistic character of human experience that eludes the sciences. Karol Wojtyla was educated in this tradition, and to this day his work can be understood as growing out of its richest philosophical innovation: phenomenology. First articulated by Edmund Husserl in the early years of this century, phenomenology was eventually developed in various directions by some of the century's greatest philosophers, including Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jan Patocka, and Max Scheler (the subject of one of Wojtyla's dissertations). All of these

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thinkers shared the conviction that the gateway to human truths could be found in the surface of things — with how they appear to us. Phenomenology thus begins with the rejection of what it sees as the reductionism of science, its tendency to look beneath the surface of things — beneath their appearances — for a more fundamental account that explains (or explains away) those appearances. For instance, a geneticist would say that human beings might *seem* to be radically different from other forms of life, but our DNA shows that we *really* differ from them only in minor ways. Similarly, cyberneticists would say that it might *seem* like we differ fundamentally from man-made devices, but we *really* are nothing more than highly complex computers. Lastly, political scientists would say that it might *seem* like politicians sometimes act for the sake of the common good, but they *really* are rational calculators of their self-interest.

He begins by noting that certain "fundamental questions . . . pervade human life" across every culture.

Phenomenology refuses to engage in any such reductionism when it comes to understanding mankind. In the place of scientific explanations, it proposes to substitute a largely descriptive account of human experience, and then, on the basis of that description, to develop a comprehensive view of human life. The finest example of John Paul's use of the phenomenological approach can be found in his most recent encyclical, *Fides et Ratio* (*Faith and Reason*), from 1998. There he begins by noting that certain "fundamental questions . . . pervade human life" across every culture: "Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going? Why is there evil? What is there after this life?" These questions have their root in "the quest for meaning which has always compelled the human heart." Picking up on age-old theme in the philosophical tradition, John Paul argues that the "desire for truth" is thus "part of human nature itself." It is "an innate property of human reason to ask why things are as they are." We find evidence for this fundamental human truth in the scientist's selfless devotion to his research — as well as in his half-hidden opinion that there is something noble in this devotion. We find it in the curiosity of those who seek to familiarize themselves with his discoveries by reading newspaper articles and watching TV reports that explain them. And we find it above all in the experience of "wonder" that is awakened by our contemplation of the world around us: "Human beings are astounded to discover themselves as part of the world, in a relationship with others like them," and they ultimately long to know the truth about — and the meaning of — this experience.

According to John Paul, two contemporary trends prevent us from fulfilling this longing by blinding us to its presence within ourselves. First, our very proficiency at seeking truth through scientific methods has distracted us

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from our own true motives. Constantly bombarded by information, we have "wilted under the weight of so much knowledge." As a result, our reason has become fixated on details and no longer recognizes that what drives us to seek information in the first place is our desire for truth about the whole of things. As he writes, "little by little" our reason has "lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being." At the same time, popular forms of skepticism and relativism (often referred to as "postmodernism") form a second obstacle to self-awareness by inspiring "distrust of the human being's capacity for knowledge." With a "false modesty, people rest content with partial and provisional truths, no longer seeking to ask radical questions about the meaning and ultimate foundation of human, personal, and social existence."

"Little by little" our reason has "lost the capacity to lift its gaze to the heights, not daring to rise to the truth of being."

The practical consequences of this self-satisfaction are deeply distressing. "Without wonder," men and women "lapse into deadening routine." Moreover, the "legitimate plurality of positions" that can inevitably be found in a given society gives way to "an undifferentiated pluralism based upon the assumption that all positions are equally valid." According to John Paul, this easygoing relativism is "one of today's most widespread symptoms of the lack of confidence in truth." In such circumstances, "everything is reduced to opinion" and there comes to be "a sense of being adrift" amidst the "rapid and complex change" of modern life. We might be better off economically than any generation in human history, but we are spiritually lost, lacking "valid points of reference" and "stumbl[ing] through life to the very edge of the abyss without knowing where [we] are going."

Although his description of our current situation might sound bleak, John Paul does not wish to counsel despair. We might very well live at a time when "the ephemeral is affirmed as a value and the possibility of discovering the real meaning of life is cast into doubt," but it is still possible to make a "patient inquiry into what makes life worth living." Wearing his phenomenological training on his sleeve, he maintains that one need only look at, listen to, and honestly describe what human beings continue to do and say. Even the most cynical postmodern critics, for example, think their own skepticism reflects the truth about man and the world, and the critics themselves care deeply about that truth. Otherwise, they would never bother to think through the arguments in favor of those views, let alone go through the effort of writing or publishing them. For John Paul, our actions betray us, whatever we may think we believe — they tell us that Aristotle was right to note that "all human beings desire to know," for our experience shows us that no one is "genuinely indifferent to the question of whether what they

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know is true or not." Despite what they might say (or not say), today's geneticists, cyberneticists, political scientists, and even postmodern theorists are united (with the rest of us) in seeking

> an absolute which might give to all their searching a meaning and an answer — something ultimate, which might serve as the ground of all things. In other words, they seek a final explanation, a supreme value, which refers to nothing beyond itself and which puts an end to all questioning. Hypotheses may fascinate, but they do not satisfy. Whether we admit it or not, there comes for everyone the moment when personal existence must be anchored to a truth recognized as final, a truth which confers a certitude no longer open to doubt.

According to John Paul, this longing for transcendent truth is coeval with human existence: All men and women "shape a comprehensive vision and an answer to the question of life's meaning." And it is in the light of this vision and answer that "they interpret their own life's course and regulate their behavior."

A false autonomy

IT WILL SURPRISE no one to learn that the pope believes this longing is ultimately a desire and nostalgia for God — or that he is convinced there is something to satisfy it. What is more unexpected is how difficult it is to dismiss his arguments about the need for free societies to base themselves on a religious foundation. This claim will strike many of us as absurd — as the predictable assertion of a man of God who leads a church with a long history of theocratic ambitions. In contrast, we tend to think that our pluralistic society can get along just fine without an established church. Indeed, we believe the nation can thrive even when the government acts in a way overtly hostile to religion, as it has tended to do over the past 50 years. Civil libertarians tell us that being left alone to do or think anything you wish (short of violating anyone else's right to do the same) is the necessary and sufficient condition of a free society.

But is it? John Paul is no proponent of ecclesistical establishment. But throughout his writings, he makes a powerful case that if rights are not grounded in a religious notion of innate human dignity they will be exceedingly fragile. Individuals will assert their own rights when it is in their interest to do so, but they will also seek to violate the rights of others when they think they can get away with it. According to the pope, then, genuine social and political freedom depends on more than self-interest; rights must be based on the absolute moral principle that it is wrong in itself to violate another's rights, regardless of the consequences (or lack of consequences). This is why he argues in *Evangelium Vitae* (*On the Value and Inviolability of Human Life*) that "there can be no true democracy without a recognition

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of every person's dignity" and goes on to claim that it is

> urgently necessary, for the future of society and the development of a sound democracy, to rediscover those essential and innate human and moral values which flow from the very truth of the human being and express and safeguard the dignity of the person: values which no individual, no majority and no State can ever create, modify or destroy, but must only acknowledge, respect and promote.

Without such an inviolable notion of human dignity, man gets reduced in his own eyes to a mere "thing," which, like other things we encounter in the world, can be controlled and manipulated. Moreover, when we begin to forget that democracy is not an end in itself but rather only a means to the end of ensuring the protection of human rights, public opinion threatens to become the only standard of moral truth. Instead of recognizing that the value of "democracy stands or falls with the values which it embodies and promotes," we look to polling data as the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong. But this is, of course, no standard at all. Modern man — like man simply — needs to be shown why he should treat certain basic human rights as inalienable, no matter what common opinion might say.

John Paul claims that we can find a ground for human dignity — and thus also a basis for the inalienability of rights — if we "foster, in ourselves and in others, a contemplative outlook" on life. This is

> the outlook of those who see life in its deeper meaning, who grasp its utter gratuitousness, its beauty and its invitation to freedom and responsibility. It is the outlook of those who do not presume to take possession of reality but instead accept it as a gift, discovering in all things the reflection of the Creator and seeing in every person his living image.

Only on the basis of this "deep religious awe" can we learn to "revere and honor every person" in the way societies founded on individual rights call on us to do. In making this argument, John Paul appears to stand with Thomas Jefferson who, we should recall, claimed in the Declaration of Independence that our "inalienable rights" were an endowment granted to us by our "Creator." And he also joins many conservatives in the U.S. today who doubt that there can be any basis for rights other than a religious one.

There are, of course, many obstacles to recalling modern democracies to their theological roots, not the least of which is the view, currently fashionable in the American academy, according to which democracy needs no foundation other than the "autonomy" of human reason or thought. Found in various forms in philosophers from Immanuel Kant through John Rawls, the ethic of autonomy is, for John Paul, the height of folly. To the extent that the university professors who advocate it continue to behave decently and fulfill their civic duties, they demonstrate that they have fallen short of genuine autonomy. Far from relying on their reason alone, they covertly derive their moral principles from the societies in which they live, deluding them-

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selves and their students into believing that they were able to generate them out of thin air. True autonomy, in contrast, would look very different. Rather than issuing in respect for rights and human dignity, autonomy is indistinguishable from license to satisfy all of one's passions, from the most innocuous to the nastiest, without the slightest hint of restraint. It is, in the words of his *Centesimus Annus* (*On the Hundred Anniversary* of Leo XII's *Rerum Novarum*), freedom detached

> from obedience to the truth, and consequently from the duty to respect the rights of others. The essence of freedom then becomes self-love carried to the point of contempt for God and neighbor, a self-love which leads to an unbridled affirmation of self-interest and which refuses to be limited by any demand for justice.

John Paul argues that we must reject the call to cast off the limits to our freedom, for "only by admitting his innate dependence can man live and use his freedom to the full, and at the same time respect the freedom of every other person." It is, paradoxically, by accepting limitations to our autonomy — by acknowledging the existence of fixed moral boundaries that ought never to be transgressed — that authentic human freedom becomes possible. Without such limits, man lacks both a measure for his actions and a circumscribed sphere in which to actualize his freedom.

Communism and capitalism

JOHN PAUL'S UNSHAKABLE belief in mankind's innate dignity has led him to issue some of the Catholic Church's most controversial statements of dogma and doctrine in recent years — his passionate denunciations of abortion, euthanasia, and (in somewhat more muted tones) capital punishment. Refusing to mince words, he argues that the prevalence of these practices is a disturbing sign that societies around the globe are embracing a "culture of death." As is well known, no issue arouses John Paul's ire as much as abortion. Morally indistinguishable from infanticide in his teaching, abortion and its widespread acceptance within nations claiming to uphold human rights are an indication of "an extremely dangerous crisis of the moral sense, which is becoming more and more incapable of distinguishing between good and evil, even when the fundamental right to life is at stake." Faced with this indifference to morality, the proper course of action is clear. We must speak the plain truth: that "procured abortion is the deliberate and direct killing, by whatever means it is carried out, of a human being in the initial phase of his or her existence." According to John Paul, this conclusion follows necessarily from the same view of human dignity that must undergird the belief in inalienable human rights more generally.

But the pope's insistence on grounding rights in dignity has political implications that go far beyond the issue of abortion. Most important, it con-

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tributes in a decisive way to his controversial assessment of communism and capitalism, both of which have come in for harsh criticism in his writings over the years. Of course, John Paul is no relativist, and he has never engaged in spurious moral equivalences. Yet, neither has he ever openly endorsed one social system over the other. He has preferred instead to point out weaknesses in each social arrangement in the hope that he might be able to inspire the reforms he believes that morality demands.

In the case of communism, the pope's criticism is admirably elegant and recalls many of the arguments espoused by thoughtful intellectuals in the West throughout the Cold War. As he writes, "the fundamental error of socialism is anthropological." That is, it misunderstands human nature. For communism treats the individual as "an element, a molecule within the social organism," and in doing so, it completely subordinates him to the collective. But that is not all. Communism makes the additional mistake of assuming that the goodness of an individual and a community can be separated from considerations of whether that individual or community makes good or evil choices. For a communist, what matters is not whether an act is morally right or wrong in itself, but whether the act furthers the larger goal of "the movement." Communism is thus Machiavellianism raised to the status of a world-historical principle; it excuses any deed, as long as that deed can be shown to be a means to achieving its end. The practical effect of these errors is the attempt to transform man from a responsible agent into a being whose existence is defined by its role in the "functioning of the socio-economic mechanism." But the simple fact is that man requires a political and social life that reflects his nature rather than one that tries, in vain, to make him into something other than what he is. Communism collapsed throughout the world when it finally and definitively became apparent that this attempt to transform humanity could never succeed.

Communism is thus Machiavelli raised to the status of a world-historical principle.

But for all of the theoretical errors of communism and the damage done in its name, John Paul maintains that it did have one strength: the identification of alienation — or the "loss of the authentic meaning of life" — as a serious problem within modern societies. To be sure, the Marxist analysis of alienation in materialistic terms is false, just as its claim that alienation would be eliminated in a collectivist society has proven to be illusory. However, the experience of alienation needs to be recognized as real and its true cause identified. For John Paul, that cause is clear: Alienation arises when man gives himself over to a "purely human plan for reality, to an abstract ideal or to a false utopia." By attempting to treat the disease of alienation with just such a "human plan" and "false utopia," communism greatly exacerbated the very malady it was devised to cure. The only true

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way to combat alienation is to create a form of "social organization, production and consumption" that encourages man to see "in himself and in others the value and grandeur of the human person." Without such encouragement, man "deprives himself of the possibility of benefiting from his humanity and of entering into [a] relationship of solidarity and communion with others."

Which raises the question of whether, contrary to what Marxism always asserted, capitalism contains the resources necessary to combat alienation. The pope's answer is, as he admits, "complex":

> If by 'Capitalism' is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative. . . . But if by 'Capitalism' is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly in the negative.

There can be little doubt from his many writings on the subject that John Paul believes that capitalist nations all too often end up far closer to the latter, libertarian position than they do to the former, religiously communitarian one that he ultimately advocates. When they come to embrace their own form of materialism, capitalist societies can easily be made compatible with the denial of "an autonomous existence and value to morality, law, culture and religion." To the extent that they do, capitalism comes to "agree with Marxism, in the sense that it totally reduces man to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs."

According to John Paul, capitalism and its ideological partisans forget at their peril that "the mere accumulation of goods and services, even for the benefit of the majority, is not enough for the realization of human happiness," as he writes in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concerns)*. When this happens, capitalists make an anthropological error no less grave than the one committed by their communist rivals. They begin to strive toward an ideal of "superdevelopment, which consists in an excessive availability of every kind of material goods," which, in turn, "makes people slaves of 'possession' and of immediate gratification, with no other horizon than the multiplication or continual replacement of the things already owned with others." Echoing social critics from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Aleksandr Solshenitzyn and Vaclav Havel, John Paul argues that the "crass materialism" that accompanies "pure consumerism" leads inexorably to "a radical dissatisfaction" on the part of individuals. Beneath the noisy clatter of "publicity and the ceaseless and tempting offers of products," citizens within capitalist societies begin to sense that their "deeper aspirations" are "unsatisfied

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and perhaps even stifled." They lose sight of the fact that "having" is far less important than "the quality and the ordered hierarchy of the goods one has."

In order to turn capitalism away from its excesses and realize the authentically communitarian potential within it, John Paul tells us that we must raise our sights above mere economic calculation. As he writes, "of itself, an economic system does not possess criteria for correctly distinguishing new and higher forms of satisfying human needs from artificial new needs which hinder the formation of a mature personality." For this reason, "a great deal of educational and cultural work is urgently needed, including the education of consumers in the responsible use of their power of choice." The ultimate end of this education must be the creation of "lifestyles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments." In short, the key to transforming capitalism into a social order capable of solving rather than aggravating the problem of alienation is directing our gaze upward, to a higher common good than economic prosperity.

The duties of governments

Although John Paul explicitly denies that he intends to be advocating a communitarian "third way" between capitalism and communism, it is clear that a social system in which progress was "measured and oriented to . . . man seen in his totality" rather than to man seen merely as an acquiring animal would look very different from America in the year 2000. And indeed, the pope's recent encyclicals do contain a series of public policy proposals designed to inject a large dose of morality and communal spirit into capitalist societies. As with so many of his ideas, these proposals cut across traditional party lines in the United States. Just as many of the policies he advocates would delight the most leftward members of the U.S. House of Representatives, the arguments he uses to justify them are reminiscent of the views associated with the religious right. He has, in other words, a number of important affinities with the distinguished tradition of Christian (and especially Catholic) socialism.

Unlike many American conservatives, for whom moral decline and the growth of government are mutually reinforcing forms of corruption, the pope's answer to spiritual decay is not less government, but more of it. The first step in cutting through the materialism that infests our society is to show that, contrary to what John Locke and his libertarian admirers would have us believe, the right to private property, though an important component of freedom, is not inviolable. "The possession of material goods is not an absolute right," he claims, "and . . . its limits are inscribed in its very nature as a human right." It is essential, as he puts it in *Laborem Exercens*

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(*On Human Work*) that we come to conceive of our right to private property "within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole of creation: the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone."

Once we begin to accept that we are not morally entitled to take everything we can for ourselves, we will, he thinks, see the justice of providing substantially for the less fortunate members of the human community. From the "right to life and subsistence," John Paul derives a duty of the government to provide unemployment benefits, set a livable minimum wage, and ensure that health care is available to all and that workers are compensated for injuries incurred on the job. The workplace must be regulated to ensure the safety of employees, just as the "right to a pension and to insurance for old age" should be recognized by the state. The "right to rest" implies that workers ought to be given at least one weekly day of rest as well as a yearly vacation. Moreover, the pope would have the government provide "family wage" subsidies to enable women to stay at home to raise children if they choose. And, lest anyone feel excluded from the community, provisions must be made to help the disabled to find work that is suited to them.

In short, all the tasks of the contemporary welfare state receive moral endorsement from the Roman pontiff.

In short, all the tasks of the contemporary welfare state — and some as yet only dreams in the minds of its greatest advocates — receive a moral endorsement from the Roman pontiff. Reading his writings would thus be a bracing experience for an American conservative, were it not for an important qualification in John Paul's political theory. Recognizing that "the social nature of man is not completely fulfilled in the state," the pope makes an argument that has been popularized in the United States by such figures as Novak and Father Richard John Neuhaus — namely, that social programs are most effective when they are instituted and administered by "intermediary groups" in civil society rather than the state. To be sure, the government must intervene directly on the behalf of the disadvantaged by "defending the weakest, by placing certain limits on the autonomy of the parties who determine working conditions, and by ensuring in every case the necessary minimum support for the unemployed worker." But its indirect role is even more crucial. In keeping with what the pope calls the "principle of subsidiarity," the government must create the conditions in which sub-political institutions will be encouraged to contribute to realizing the common good. Rather than taking over the role played by private charities, churches, families, local governments, and other intermediate institutions, the state should nurture "the internal life" of the larger community while "support[ing] it in case of need and help[ing] to coordinate its activity." On closer inspection, then, John

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Paul's political proposals arguably place him closer to the "compassionate conservatism" of Marvin Olasky than to the bureaucratic paternalism of Eurosocialism.

Means and ends

STILL, ONE WONDERS if "subsidiarity" is enough to solve the problems that plague us. John Paul is certainly right to emphasize that free societies can only hope to achieve the right balance of economic dynamism and communal solidarity when all of their citizens, and especially those who toil in poverty, come to see "work as a duty." And yet, he has very little to say about how the poor in his ideal state — bestowed as they are with generous public and private benefits — will be brought around to this view of the world. At times, he writes as if the spiritual benefits of labor are so obvious that the poor will embrace work as soon as it is made available to them. But surely this is naïve. If the recent history of American public policy has shown anything, it is that the state can and must sometimes act in a way that falls somewhat short of Christian charity in order to elicit the behavior the pope would have us believe arises spontaneously.

This is not to say that John Paul is unaware of the role the state can play in altering human conduct. He realizes, for instance, that the bureaucratic apparatus of the government can produce "passivity, dependence, and submission," and in the worst cases even destroy "the spirit of initiative, that is to say the creative subjectivity of the citizen." But he nonetheless hesitates to draw the right public policy implications from his insight: that the best of intentions can produce social pathologies in the poor that can only be remedied by refusing to coddle them.

That the pope refuses to entertain the possibility that the individual as well as collective good can sometimes be brought about by means that, viewed in isolation, appear to be morally suspect is a sign of a larger problem in his political thought. Let's call it a lack of appreciation for the role of moral ambivalence in politics. Although the impulse to avoid Machiavellianism — the view that the end justifies the means — is a decent one, it is easy to take this aversion too far, to blind oneself to the fact that Machiavellian considerations aren't always altogether evil. When, for example, they alert us to the harsh fact that being a force for good in the world occasionally requires a willingness to transgress the bounds of ordinary decency, Machiavellian insights can actually contribute to realizing that good. The ends don't always justify the means, but they sometimes do.

Nowhere are the problematic consequences of John Paul's refusal to accept this fact more apparent than in his comments on foreign affairs. Embracing a view that comes perilously close to pacifism, he condemns virtually all uses of military force, including the "tragic war in the Persian Gulf." Going further, he also denounces the "insane arms race" that was

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precipitated by the Cold War, thereby refusing to acknowledge the role it played in bringing down the Soviet Union. And as for those nations that have "an unacceptably exaggerated concern for security," the pope has nothing but contempt, since, in his view, they are the primary obstacle to bringing about a situation in which all the nations of the world are "united [in] cooperation . . . for the common good of the human race."

The problem with these views is not that they are based on a faulty assessment of the character of warfare. After all, who among us would deny that war is an evil — that, especially in the modern age, it "destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred"? But, at the same time, we are also entitled to ask if it is really true that warfare *always* "makes it more difficult to find a just solution of the very problems which provoked the war [in the first place]." History — and above all the bloody history of the twentieth century — proves otherwise.

John Paul's view can hardly be said to lack foundation. Here, however, his philosophy and his religious faith collide.

It is a sad fact — but a fact nevertheless — that from time to time war is necessary, and that it can even further the cause of justice every once in a while, despite the orphans and widows it leaves in its wake. In proposing a political theory that fails to take account of this aspect of political life, the pope ends up in the same moral quandary as Kofi Annan, who advocates "humanitarian intervention" in the atrocities of the world while lacking the resources and the resolve to take brutal and decisive action — the only things that could make a real difference.

John Paul's view can hardly be said to lack foundation. Here, however, his philosophy and his religious faith collide, and where other religious thinkers have sought to distinguish between just and unjust wars, John Paul chooses to defer to the straightforward meaning of Jesus's words. As a statement of absolute moral purity, for instance, the Sermon on the Mount is unrivaled; it thus justly commands our respect and admiration. But as a proposal for political practice, it is a recipe for disaster. We might very well be moved by hearing that we ought to "love our enemies," but what if our enemy is Hitler, or Stalin, or Mao, or the Khmer Rouge, or machete wielding thugs in Somalia or Sierra Leone? What if "turning the other cheek" means allowing evil to triumph in the world and the cause of human decency to be vanquished? What if acting as submissively as the "lilies of the field" leads to the victory of intolerant ideologies that would brutally stamp out freedom, as it surely would have if the West had laid down its arms in 1939, 1945, 1962, or 1981? The craving for consistency might lead us to think that "no man can serve two masters" — both

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"God and mammon" — but is it not our fate in this life to have to do just that?

In following Christ's most stringent teachings to the letter, John Paul ends up espousing a view that apparently would require him, as well as all truly righteous Christians, to resist some future tyrant seeking to wipe Christianity from the face of the Earth with no more than prayer and passive resistance. One wonders if this would be sufficient. The historical record suggests it would not.

None of these concerns should be taken as reason to call into question the overall depth and profundity of John Paul's intellectual contribution to our times. Like all genuine philosophers, his arguments and ideas are worth more as catalysts for independent thinking than as frozen and flawless creeds that must be swallowed whole or not at all. But John Paul's work is important for more than just the views he articulates on this or that subject. In an age when original, comprehensive reflection on the human condition and the political situation of mankind has all but died out, the pope's voluminous writings are also a reminder of the greatness of which the human mind is capable when it sets itself to the task of understanding. For this as well as the considerable wisdom contained in those writings, Pope John Paul II deserves to be judged among the most remarkable minds of the twentieth century.

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Védrinism: France's Global Ambition

By CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER Hubert Védrine was an architect of NATO's Kosovo invasion, but he made his biggest impression on American France-watchers last June in Warsaw. There, at the close of a "democracy summit," he alone refused to sign a final statement, put forward by U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, which set out what she saw as the West's vision for encouraging emerging democracies. It was a toothless, rather anodyne document — filled with platitudes about promoting a free press and respecting labor rights — so there wasn't much constructive reason to vote for it. But there wasn't much reason to vote against it, either — aside from France's anger that, at a time when the rules of the world are being redrafted, the United States gets to do all the redrafting. Védrine didn't beat around the bush about his motivations. As he said last spring, shortly before the conference, he is intent on a redefinition of French-American relations. The Cold War is over. In negotiations with the United States, France must stand up for France. On international panels (as in Warsaw), France's value-added comes from its difference. It must thus move "from a grumpy *oui* to a respectful *non*."

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In turn, France's aggressively confident posture has resuscitated American francophobia, particularly among conservatives. But the vision of France that appears in American business newspapers like the *Wall Street Journal* — involuted, fixated on its past, an economic archaism, reflexively anti-American — is drifting farther and farther from reality. France is up to something bigger. It remains true that France is overregulated by American standards (although it is a considerably freer country in such lifestyle matters as smoking and accommodating pets). The country is still very bureaucratized (despite good-faith efforts by conservative Gaullist president Jacques Chirac to cut red tape). It is still arrogantly insistent on its global stature.

But France's claims to that stature are now stronger than they have been for decades. France remains the No. 4 economic power in the world, and in the three years since the election of Socialist Premier Lionel Jospin, it has been transformed from the Sick Man of Europe into the world's healthiest economy — outside of the United States. Its rate of job creation is the second highest of any western economy (the U.S., again, leads), and its rate of high-tech job creation is tops. Measured by hours on the job, it has the hardest-working labor force in Europe. Its victory in the World Cup in 1998 started a process of national self-esteem-boosting: For Bastille Day this year, the popular weekly *Marianne* ran an outsized issue listing the dozens of ways in which France was still the world's leading country. Campaigning politicians (not to mention a growing caste of high-tech startup entrepreneurs who give motivation lectures) speak constantly of *la France qui gagne* ("a France that wins"). And France now leads Europe formally, holding the European Union's rotating presidency through the end of the year.

The vision of France that appears in American business newspapers — archaic, involuted — is drifting far from reality.

Most important, France's intellectual and business classes have come together behind a national mission that looks as if it will provide the country with a principle of political organization and even an ideology over the coming decades. All of France's politics is, fairly explicitly, about globalization. Walk through a French bookstore and it seems half the volumes on the best-seller wall have the word *mondialisation* in the title. The French think dialectically; they carved out an important global role for themselves in the bipolar world of the Cold War. France spent the conflict as a steady American ally, but an exceedingly high-maintenance one, wringing gestures of respect from the West by standing at its leftmost edge and feigning irresolution. To understand what France is thinking now, one must remember how badly the French were punished by the dislocations wrought by the global economy in the past decade, particularly from 1993 to 1997. Now

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they want to use their hard-won experience of globalization to seize a more ambitious role: as the second pole in a new bipolar world that is all-capitalist.

French policy makers often hint that the late anti-communist Annie Kriegel's idea of a "Global USSR System" has a parallel — an imperfect one, they'll grant — in today's global Anglophone system. Globalization may not be an American invention, but it favors those who speak its lingua franca, and develops institutionally along those countries' lines. The expression Europeans use is "le soft power," a coinage of Kennedy School Dean Joseph S. Nye Jr. The phrase can be found in almost any of that wallfull of books on *mondialisation*.

France is to be the country that "humanizes" or "tames" what Védrine and others call the "savage capitalism" that is practiced in America and Britain. Since this unregulated capitalism is the norm in Western firms' dealings with their Third World labor pool, what is at stake is a new battle for humanity's hearts and minds. Of course, France doesn't have the means to wage such a battle alone. The European Union, however, in which France retains the leading role, potentially does. And France's big project of the coming decades will be to transform Europe into a new kind of superpower: a collective one that has France at its intellectual and moral center. Hence a paradoxical politics that leads Jacques Julliard, editor in chief of the influential *Nouvel Observateur*, to say, "Today's French patriots are Europeans." Védrine is more confrontational. "The adventure of globalization," he says, "will also be ours, and will carry our mark. All our foreign policy must revolve around this idea."

France's economic windfall

THIS MUCH IS A MATTER of surprising consensus. But France's ability to call the tune of the global economy rests on its ability to compete in that economy. So far its success has been splendid. To begin with, French economic failure after *les trente glorieuses* (the 30 prosperous years that followed World War II) has always been exaggerated. Half the flats in Paris lacked running water in 1970, and the country's annual growth rate since the high-water mark of 1974 has been an impressive 2.3 percent.

Over the past three years, France has seemingly had remarkable success in arriving at its present economic health on its own terms. In November 1995, conservative Prime Minister Alain Juppé's un-French urging of (mild) austerity and (mild) welfare state reforms provoked the biggest demonstrations since the riots of May 1968. The gimmick with which Jospin won the 1997 elections was the *réduction du temps du travail* (RTT), which stipulated a 35-hour workweek in order to reduce unemployment. By this fall, over half of firms with 20 employees or more had switched over to it, and unemploy-

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ment had indeed fallen — from a high of 13 percent in 1997 to its current 9 percent level. France remains the most centralized of major economies, with 56 percent of its gross domestic product taken up by state spending.

And yet France has not been punished for its statism the way economic modelers predicted it would be in the mid-1990s. On the contrary. The European Space Agency (ESA), a largely French initiative based in French Guiana, has proved more commercially successful than NASA, and accounts for 60 percent of world satellite launches. Airbus Industrie, of which the French own 38 percent, is developing a new super-jumbo jet that aims to take over the long-haul traffic from Boeing's 747. And a disproportionate number of French boomtowns have been seeded with startup investment from Paris. The Breton village of Lannion, 20 years ago an impoverished and crumbling backwater of 20,000 souls, was envisioned by successive French governments as a mini-Silicon Valley for telecommunications. Now it is one. It is as Bobo as anything on America's West Coast, with a massive Alcatel lab, three-star Michelin restaurants, a dozen bookstores, cybercafés, and regular flights to Paris from its new airport.

The truth, too, is that even in the computer age pure capitalist countries can't control their cutting-edge advantage forever. Once technology levels off and becomes broadly disseminated, countries pit their labor forces against one another to make use of it. And, industry by industry, Europe will take its share of global production, much as it did after World War II. (It's not as if Germany invented the coffeemaker, or Japan the compact car.) Now there are plenty of dot-com companies and website designers who can do — in French — the work that American companies had to be called in to do half a decade ago. Kalisto Entertainemt in Bordeaux, a company that didn't even exist at the start of the 1990s, has become one of the world's largest makers of video games.

Still, France's dirty fiscal secret is that, for all its rhetoric about taming capitalism and charting its own course, it understands perfectly that it is playing in a capitalist world. On closer examination, it is the very global economy that French economists and politicians want to "tame" that has provided France with the foundations of its present prosperity. As Julliard says: "The leftist criticism of globalization is very useful when it points out the arrogance of the great powers. But that doesn't mean it represents an alternative."

In Europe, many political phenomena have the opposite ideological implications that they do in the United States. For instance, President François Mitterrand launched two decades ago a program of decentralization, devolution, and local control that in America would be considered right-wing, even Gingrichian — but it has had little concrete effect except to open the door to radical leftists in the Corsican nationalist movement. More important for present purposes, membership in international bodies has had right-wing effects in France. It was the need to comply with the European Union's Maastricht "convergence" criteria that gave Juppé the political leeway to

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push through at least some of his austerity measures, and Jospin's three finance ministers, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Christian Sautter, and Laurent Fabius, have been fiercely opposed to throwing the budget out of whack with big new spending programs. In his two years in office, Strauss-Kahn (working for a supposedly old-line socialist government) held discretionary spending increases to half the rate of those budgeted by Britain's chancellor of the exchequer Gordon Brown (working for a supposedly crypto-Thatcherite government).

Globalization has saved France from its worst side. It has given the country's technocratic political class an excuse to do things it wanted to do anyway, at least since 1983, when the devoted socialist Mitterrand retreated from his program of massive privatizations and inflation. All France's banks (except Crédit Lyonnais, ignominiously rescued from bankruptcy by a Chrysler-style national government bailout) have been privatized or reprivatized in the past decade and a half. Jospin himself has privatized both Air France and France Télécom, and offered a broad tax cut in 1999. And accidents have helped: A strong dollar has strengthened France's export position and left it with huge trade surpluses.

What's not certain is whether France's very success will Anglo-Saxonize its elites. There are now 350,000 Frenchmen in Britain, and while about the same number of Britons live in France, the Brits tend to be retirees and waiters, while the French tend to be bankers and executives. There are 40,000 Frenchmen registered at the country's consulate in San Francisco (most of them Silicon Valley workers). More than 1,000 French companies have established headquarters in England. Over a third of the stocks traded on the French bourse are owned by foreigners, and such people have a financial interest in seeing that France's traditionally secretive practices where government and business intersect — which tend to be the preserve of a tight-knit elite from the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA), the École Polytechnique (X), and other "grands écoles" — are opened up. One sign that change is coming to France's ruling class is that papers have been full since last spring of articles touting an "identity crisis" of ENA and X grads, faced with a competition for prestige from Internet entrepreneurs. France may find it harder and harder to have American-style prosperity without American-style social organization.

Védrinism in theory

NO ONE HAS THOUGHT more seriously about what France can do vis-à-vis America than Védrine, a Mitterrand protégé who is a product of the elite Conseil d'État. Védrine sees the entire world of institutions — political, economic, social — as totally in flux, due to globalization. He sounds almost indignant when he says: "No people has asked for it, yet it is imposed on all." Védrine has often said that "we need a

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new Montesquieu who can think everything over again starting from zero." In a series of interviews last spring and summer with *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro*, and the journalist and policy analyst Dominique Moïsi (collected in a superb volume called *Les cartes de la France a l'heure de la mondialisation*, and published by Fayard in Paris), Védrine outlined a fairly comprehensive picture of an emerging French ideology.

The cornerstone of his new thinking is the collection of non-governmental political activists who increasingly move politics around the world — feminists, tax protesters, World Trade Organization paranoids, runners of privatized social services. He also keeps an eye on the crypto-governmental powers of the mass media and an activist judiciary. (Suffice it to say that France, like other Western countries, has one. But unlike in the United States, where judicial activism is the preserve of liberals legislating from the bench, in France it has been taken up by *juges d'instruction* from the Generation of 1968, who have used their position to wage a class war against the political establishment of party regulars.)

International civil society will be the tool France uses to "civilize" or "humanize" globalism.

Védrine calls these institutions "international civil society." In describing them, he sounds like a cross between the Montesquieu he dreams of and the Machiavelli he is. He recognizes that this civil society is "for now, less codified, less regulated, less transparent than traditional powers." On one hand that makes it more free. On the other, that makes it less democratic, as well as culturally imperialistic, since "the most influential civil societies are necessarily those of the most powerful countries." No matter: International civil society will be the tool France uses to "civilize" or "humanize" globalism.

There used to be a sharp argument in France about whether Europe was a Trojan horse for American-style (free-market) government and society, or a potential European counterbalance to it. That argument is over. With the end of the superpower rivalry, the United States has become, to use the term that is Védrine's contribution to the French language, an *hyperpuissance*, or "hyperpower." Védrine nowadays never uses the word without adding that, in French, the prefix *hyper-* lacks the associations it has in English with disease (really big French supermarkets are called *hypermarchés*), but that doesn't mean that the term is used in a friendly way. Védrine is absolutely explicit about turning Europe into a second "pole" to counter American influence. France may not be a hyperpower, but it is one of seven countries Védrine identifies as "powers of global influence" — the others are Britain, Germany, Russia, China, Japan, and (maybe) India. The three big European states could provide plausible competition for the United States.

In theory, there's nothing anti-American about Védrine's wish to see Europe play a larger role on the world's stage, particularly its cultural stage.

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But the idea that NATO used to proclaim of a "Euro-Atlantic world" strikes him as bunk. The differences between the States and Europe are wider than ever, he thinks, and these differences will lend France's language, culture, and political institutions a "seduction effect" in the eyes of those sated with American products — provided his countrymen can hang in there and guard their cultural independence. "The fear of uniformity," he says, "will reinforce a need for diversity, and thus, among other things, a need for French." Védrine admits — even lauds — the strength of American culture. He grants that the "quasi-monopoly conquered by American cultural industries [was] obtained through a vitality that none will deny, a creativity that everyone recognizes and admires." But he adds, "That rhetoric doesn't oblige us to be swamped by a cultural tidal wave."

This is not for domestic consumption only. It's an appeal to all the world's cultures to accept French leadership in a global cultural battle. Védrine claims that democratization will be more effective if it's not perceived merely as Westernization or Americanization, and he finds Albright's conflation of the concepts crass. "To demand perfect democracy right away is to think in religious terms," Védrine says. "If you think that way — dogmatically — you're logically led to think in terms of sanctions, punishments, excommunications and anathemas. That's not my style." Furthermore, France cannot *afford* to think religiously about democracy. "If we're only allowed to associate with friends who are *comme il faut*," Védrine continues, "who think like us, we might as well renounce the possibility of acting on any problem at all, of resolving the slightest crisis — and leave the field to the United States." We now have a clear idea of why France was willing to stand alone against Albright to reject that democracy statement in Warsaw. There is an idealistic side to Védrine's democracy theorizing — under his foreign policy leadership, for instance, France has been far tougher than the U.S. on what he calls Russia's "Potemkin democracy." But there is a pragmatic side to Védrinism, too. France cannot compete against America if the battle for Third World hearts and minds is carried out through rubber-stamped U.S. conferences, aid packages, heavily staffed embassies, and projection of military power.

Védrinism in practice

THERE ARE SEVERAL practical ways in which Védrinism can be brought into existence. One is global *régulation*. It must be understood that in French, *régulation* is a synonym for ground rules, for order — not for government meddling. The French word for the latter is *réglémentation*. Traffic lights are *régulation*; anti-smoking laws are *réglémentation*. Most French people consider the United States more *réglémenté*, less free, than France. (In a rather startling development, France's 1991 "Évin laws," which established non-smoking zones in public spaces, seemed

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as recently as a year ago to be leading the country at a creeping pace towards an American-style smoke-free public square. In just the past year, however, such laws have begun to be flagrantly disobeyed. More than one Frenchman describes the reaction as one against "American" values.)

But that doesn't mean the United States should be comfortable with calls for *régulation*. President Chirac stresses the need for new global bodies, with enforcement powers. So does Védrine. Jospin in all his international speeches talks about "progress in *régulation*." The entire French government advocates international criminal courts (and approved of the Anglo-Spanish Pinochet proceedings), the Kosovo operation, new U.N. agencies, expanded European ties. In so doing, they are setting the stage for *la France qui gagne—contre les États-Unis*.

Other countries in Europe have been frustrated by France's ability to carve waivers out of onerous EU laws.

Wherever the battle for influence between France and the United States becomes a matter of international negotiation, or arbitration by an international judiciary, France has a better chance of winning. They're simply very good at this game. Other countries in Europe have been frustrated by France's ability to carve waivers out of onerous EU laws. France has had an easier time protecting its Margaux vineyards from buyouts than Germany had protecting its beer from EU rules that would have declared its centuries-old purity law an unfair trade practice. France was able to overturn a Brussels fiat that its farmers use pasteurized milk in their Camembert, far more easily than Britain has been able to get even its safest beef products back onto the European market after its mad-cow disease epidemic. It was able to muscle the European Central Bank into agreeing to cut in half the planned eight-year chairmanship of Dutch banker Wim Duisenberg in a way that would guarantee Bank of France governor Jean-Claude Trichet an eight-year tenure four years from now. It has thus far managed at world trade negotiations to keep steep walls of protection around its movies, music, and other cultural products.

The French left, to which Védrine and Jospin still belong, and towards which Chirac can be extremely conciliatory, particularly on foreign policy, is abrim with ideas on how to use transnational *régulation* to favor France's global aims. At the top of the list is the "Tobin tax," first devised by the Yale economist and Kennedy adviser James Tobin to counter currency speculation. It provides for a .05 percent tax on all currency transactions — negligible to the tourist landing in an airport, but a wholesale deterrent to traders of the George Soros variety, who may flip currencies 50 times in a day. The idea was relaunched by *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the left-wing international affairs weekly (not affiliated with the daily *Le Monde*). It has since been

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taken up so full-throatedly by French patriots that, in July, the left-wing economist Charles Wyplosz called it "an obligatory reference point wherever left-wing people meet."

What's curious is how modern the Tobin tax's constituency is. Wyplosz, who loves it, thinks it a welcome substitute for "Marxism, with its old-fogey themes of class-war and hatred of concentrated capital." New leftists like himself are beyond all that: "They've grown up with jeans, Coca-Cola, Star Wars and the Internet, and they love MacDo [McDonald's—a questionable assertion]. They're globalized!" These globalized leftists seem to be gravitating towards inequality and anti-Americanism as favored themes. And note that the shocks the Tobin tax is designed to avoid have taken place far from France, which has not had a currency collapse along the lines of Mexico, Russia, Southeast Asia — or even Britain in 1992. These globalized activists go farther than Tobin, and that's because there's something in it for France. Following the United Nations Program for Development (UNPD) and the 100,000-member ATTAC organization, set up in France to lobby for the Tobin tax, they envision a .1 percent levy, administered by UNPD, that could used to provide $150 billion in annual aid to the Third World. That's a budget that would dwarf, by a factor of dozens, the carrot-dangling wherewithal of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The key regulatory task for France is capturing and holding Europe.

The key regulatory task for France is capturing and holding Europe. This is a global project. As Mitterrand said in the mid-1990s, "Never separate the grandeur of France from the building of Europe. This is our new dimension." Ingenious politicians in both parties, including France's intelligent European minister Pierre Moscovici, work bilaterally with other countries to keep France at what Jacques Delors used to call the "hard core" of Europe. Germany's reunification, of course, makes this project harder. As the political scientist Pierre Manent says, "Whether or not Germany succeeds in liberating itself from its history — and whether or not it wants to — it will probably feel a need to liberate itself from France."

France's agenda for its European Union presidency contains Russian and Balkan relations, tariff fights with the United States over bananas, and EU enlargement. It also contains two priorities that one would associate with a country seeking global influence: discussions on integration of European defense and a European Charter of Fundamental Rights.

An independent European defense arm has been a priority since Kosovo, when European countries felt they were being dragged along with no veto power by an American leadership whose priorities didn't necessarily jibe with their own. These defense plans, in which Britain and France have taken the lead, were hatched by Védrine, but they have thus far been underfunded.

It's hard to tell just how seriously Védrine and Chirac take this initiative.

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On one hand, France seems to be putting its defense interests on the back burner. Chirac's plan to end mandatory military service will come into effect in 2002 (and will further augment France's annual "peace dividend" of 20 billion francs). Meanwhile, General Jean-Pierre Kelche, chief of staff of the French army, estimates that the use of a large contingent of French troops in Kosovo and the deployment of the army to fight disastrous oil spills in Brittany has put France's armed forces — once formidable, but now shrunken to 300,000 troops — at the limits of their capacity.

On the other hand, there are signs that France, and Europe, are ready to make a bold move towards defense independence. French policy makers are fascinated by America's debate on creating a nuclear shield against "rogue states" with weapons of mass destruction. This fascination cannot stem from real outrage. While the U.S. has its GPALS system, other countries think missile defense is a good idea, too: Russia is developing its S-300, Israel its Arrow, France and Italy their (considerably more modest) Aster 30. But the preoccupation with missile defense becomes more explicable if one looks at Madeline Albright's warnings on European defense, which she summed up as the "3Ds": (1) no decoupling (creating a military force independent of NATO); (2) no duplication (building weapons that make NATO's unnecessary); and (3) no discrimination (providing EU members with more security than non-EU ones).

Védrine treats America's rogue-state theory with scorn. ("Can one seriously think that if the leaders of these countries seek an arms buildup, it's to threaten the western countries, which have at their disposal the most formidable arsenal ever built and overwhelming capacity for retaliation?") And he warns that American reconsideration of the anti-ballistic missile treaty constitutes decoupling in itself (since both he and Jospin fear it would create "unequal zones of security"). If a well-armed Europe sought to break its defense link to the United States years or decades down the line, it would not lack for pretexts. The long-term vision of French politicians on both left and right seems to be to move France's defense resources out of its atrophied national army and into the defense force of a unified European superpower.

France's own soft power

BUT NO ONE expects such a move in the short term. For now, the centerpiece of Védrine's vision, tactically speaking, is using NGOs — those flexible, private sector-style organizations, so suitable to an Internet age — to win over foreigners. France voted against Albright in Warsaw because it understood her model of democratization favors nations that have the resources to fill every country in the world with military and political advisers and shower them with USAID money.

Védrine's preoccupation with NGOs shows another one of those diametrical ideological differences between France and the United States. In the U.S.

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it is the beneficiaries of globalization who proclaim the end of the nation-state, which the left suspects is merely a way for corporations to say, "don't tax us." The American left, meanwhile, sees no other recourse than the nation (welfare) state, saying, in effect, that any weakening of it harms the poor. Védrine is aware that non-governmental organizations are often mere ventriloquists for the poor, and transnational bodies are often representative of nothing at all. Still, the former are in the French political tradition, and the latter are venues in which the French have become consummately skilled through their membership in the European Union. As France readies itself to do battle for the allegiance of the global economy's losers, Védrine is willing to use them. This is a battle that will resemble the Cold War not in the slightest. It will pit not the CIA vs. the KGB but the colorless bureaucrats of the State Department against the flexible, charismatic, and mammothly funded *Médecins sans Frontières*.

France readies itself to do battle for the allegiance of the global economy's losers.

France's choice of the old *soixante-huitard* and founder of *Médecins sans Frontières*, Bernard Kouchner, to head the NATO occupation in Kosovo is emblematic of the new kudos that NGOs enjoy. But for a practical example of how they'd work in Védrine's vision, José Bové is more instructive. Bové is the farmer in rural Millau who has campaigned against American tariffs on the Roquefort cheese he makes, who has given consciousness-raising lectures on genetically modified food, and who is now standing trial for having vandalized a McDonald's a year ago, an act for which he became a national hero.

Bové has been condemned as a *faux paysan* — a phony peasant and mediagenic demagogue, whose real ties are to leftism rather than farming. Those who make this claim are on solid ground. Three years after participating in the 1968 riots, Bové led a group of agricultural and Occitan activists in a protest against the French army, whose plans to expand its Larzac firing range would have displaced a hundred sheep farmers. His primary ties are international, to the Honduras-based Via Campesina movement that has long sought land reform in Latin America.

But that's exactly the point. A France that plans to do battle for the sympathies of the Third World can use such free lancers, much as the British Empire made enterprising use of its buccaneers and scallywags. Bové, who spent part of his childhood in Berkeley (where his parents held research posts) and speaks fluent English, claims not to be anti-American. But in a country where the majority of the intellectual classes describe American "soft power" as resembling that of Rome, and compare French resistance to globalization to the resistance of the Gallo-Romans to the Roman empire, Bové sports a moustache patterned on that of Astérix, the French comic-book hero who is the nation's treasured symbol of anti-Roman revolt. On a

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recent visit to Colombia, Bové won big crowds and wild approval for speaking out about three things: First, he backed a Colombian request for $900 million in aid from the EU, which would reduce its fealty to the United States in the drug war. Second, he opposed President Clinton's $1.3 billion Colombia plan, which would eradicate cocaine with the pesticide fusarium oxysporum. Third, he opposed drilling by Occidental Petroleum near lands occupied by the 5,000-strong U'wa tribe, which has threatened a collective hunger strike if drilling continues. He called the planned drilling a "liquidation of the civilization of the U'wa to profit a multinational." Yet Bové is not on record as having attacked the interests of any French multinationals, many of which do business in the Colombian rain forest, and many of which are considerably larger than Occidental Petroleum.

Anti-Americanism or nationalism?

So are we in the presence of a recrudescent French anti-Americanism here? Or at least of a new nationalism? *Nouvel Observateur* editor Julliard dismisses any talk of a nationalist revival. For one thing, France's focus is on Europe — whose increasing unification is, if not wildly or universally popular, at least coming to be seen as inevitable. The 1992 Maastricht referendum that tightened the countries' formal union passed by only 51-49 in France, one of the narrowest margins on the continent, but approval for Europe has rocketed about 20 points higher since then. While there are still some intellectuals on the left who make nationalistic claims — the Napoleon biographer Max Gallo, for example, and the former Che Guevara associate and current NATO gadfly Régis Debray — they're increasingly isolated. In politics, even the Communist Party, under its leader Robert Hue, has gradually been reconciled to it. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, the last hard-nationalist leftist in premier Lionel Jospin's cabinet, who devoted much of his energy over the past three years to getting children to learn to sing "La Marseillaise," resigned recently over the government's Corsica program. Chirac, meanwhile, has done for the right what Mitterrand did for the left: He has given it a frankly pro-European cast, at a moment when nationalistic forces in his own party have splintered off to found squabbling small parties.

But France cannot brag about its patriotism by referring to Europe at the same time it dismisses worries about its nationalism by referring to France. According to Manent, old-style French nationalism is gone. "*La France qui gagne* is not *la France seule*," he notes, citing in the latter case Charles Maurras's old rallying cry. Nonetheless, the pro-American Manent believes the new French patriotism seeks to build a self-awareness of Europeans as Europeans. Certain issues are used to stoke a keen sense of Europeans' differentness from the rest of the Occident, i.e., from America — issues like capital punishment, which France abolished only in 1981, and genetically

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modified foods. These are positive forces pushing the countries into conflict, in "heightening the contradictions," but there are negative ones, too. With the end of the Cold War, there is simply less need for sympathetic Frenchmen to be pro-American. To take just a sampling of Americanophiles, the late political scientist Raymond Aron, the art critic and Sovietologist Alain Besançon, the editor and intellectual Jean-Claude Casanova, the late historians François Furet and Annie Kriegel — these were all French patriots who felt a need, faced with the Soviet threat, to put a lot of their eggs in the basket of the American way. There's no such need at present. Contemporary French pro-Americanism is directed less towards the country or its citizens than towards its business practices.

Meanwhile, there *is* anti-Americanism in France, and much as intellectuals are inclined to say otherwise, it is not confined to the elites. According to the former *London Times* Paris correspondent John Ardagh, the whole populace is growing a bit more mistrustful. Between 1988 and 1996, a Sofres poll found, Frenchmen who saw America "with sympathy" fell from 54 percent to 35 percent. Seventy percent "judge American cultural influence in France 'excessive.'"

The second universal nation

BUT AT THE END of the day, the two countries come into conflict not because of France's anti-Americanism but because of France's American-ness (or America's Frenchness). To discuss the two countries is to discuss the only two countries in the world whose national self-understanding and political self-definition are wrapped up in the sense that they are bearers of universal truths. In this belief, none is more French than Hubert Védrine, who notes: "A big part of French opinion thinks that France's particular role is to intervene abroad for the good of others. This is something very old and rather specific to France." And to one other country.

Julliard says, "France will take the lead in Europe, will dominate Europe — but not by military means this time. France will dominate Europe by the power of its universalist ideas." This is a mission complicated by France's decades-long sublimation of much of its own recent history. The country is living through a searing reexamination of its collaboration with Nazism during the Vichy years. So France's desire to sell Europe on its admirable universalist values is made the more passionate by a felt need to permanently anchor France in them as well. Hence the priority it sets on passing a European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Hence Chirac's willingness to burn bridges within the EU itself, organizing a boycott of Austria after it admitted the right-winger Jörg Haider into a coalition government (which led Haider to dismiss Chirac as "a pocket Napoleon").

As Julliard says, "Every time I go to the U.S., I'm struck by how much the two countries resemble one another." He's right. Pace Ben Wattenberg, the

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columnist who has described the United States as "the first universal nation," France, with its 3.6 million foreigners and 4 million French citizens born abroad, is proportionately every bit as "universal." And it may become more so. The consultant Ali Magoudi, who co-authored a book on Europe with Chirac's oldest political ally, Jerome Monod, advises executives in some of France's largest multinationals. One CEO told Magoudi last summer that he was making his business plans based on the assumption that Europe would receive 100 million immigrants over the next 20 years. Magoudi nods at that and says: "*C'est nous qui sommes le nouveau monde, mon ami.*" ("It's we who are the new world, pal.")

Magoudi has a point. France *was* the archaic country of popular cliché as recently as three years ago, but that archaism has become a paradoxical source of modernity. Because France was so badly pummeled during what practically everyone calls the *période de pessimisme* of 1993-97, its search for solutions has been more dogged. And in France, the global economy's losers (or, more accurately put, those elites of the global economy who claim to represent them) have come up with a more sophisticated politics, a means that what's left of the left can use to harness the nation-state to its own ends. France has become the first country to look at a global economy built to American specifications and say: Two can play at that game.

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The Transition: A Guide For the President-elect

By ALVIN S. FELZENBERG

ONCE THE RESULTS of the longest campaign in American history are known, public and press attention will shift from the election to another quadrennial ritual in American politics, the transition. What the next president-elect does and doesn't do during the 70-plus days between his election and his inauguration will have more to do with his success as president than perhaps any other decisions he will make.

Examples abound of presidents who stumbled into office because of hastily considered actions during transitions. Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter, for instance, decided early on that they would name strong individuals to their Cabinets and allow them to select all of their deputies and political subordinates. They later voiced frustration over their administrations' failure to speak with one voice. Confusion and open conflict resulted.

Some analysts trace episodes such as Kennedy's handling of the Bay of Pigs, Carter's stymied energy proposals, and Bill Clinton's slowness in filling positions to the vagaries of their respective transitions. Clinton's declaration that he would have a cabinet that "looked like America" and his broad hint that he wanted a woman as attorney general led to speedy, if not sloppy vetting procedures, followed by rapid-fire embarrassments known as

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"Nannygate." His unexpected declaration that he intended to lift the ban on homosexuals openly serving in the military, before he had selected all his key defense and national security advisers, produced months of backpedaling and drew attention and time away from the rest of his agenda. Ronald Reagan, on the other hand, glided into office. His apparent self-confidence and insouciant air bespoke a man with a clear sense of how he wanted his administration to function. Thanks to advanced planing with a handful of experienced advisers, he entered office knowing how he would fill key posts and with whom, which posts would be filled in what order, how nominees would be selected, and which policies his administration would pursue first.

The days and weeks after a hard fought election are hardly optimal times for a new president to make what may be the most important decisions of his term. He and his key advisers are ecstatic, exhilarated, and exhausted. If history is any guide, they are prone to show more than a bit of hubris. Having won the biggest and toughest job in the world, most reason that nothing ahead of them can be as difficult as what they have already achieved. Eventually the reality sets in: They have little more than 70 days to name a Cabinet, organize a White House, devise a legislative strategy, place their stamp on world events, solidify relations with supporters, apprehend the difference between "recruitment" and "patronage," and learn to work with and through the Washington media. Presidents often ask themselves what their legacy will be. They should understand that it starts taking shape in the crucible of the transition.

Opportunities and perils

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH the British system of government as well as the American have long marveled at the differences in how both democracies turn over power from one government to another. In most parliamentary governments, especially the British, the process is concluded in a matter of hours. The outgoing prime minister pays a visit to the queen, submits his resignation, and either departs from public life, assumes his new post as opposition leader, or retreats to the back benches. The incoming leader, after also calling upon the queen, moves into 10 Downing Street no later than the day after the election. Everyone knows who will hold top government posts. Most have already served in "shadow" Cabinets holding portfolios similar to those they will now officially assume.

In the United States, which operates under a system of separated powers and in which the president serves as both head of state and chief of government, transitions are a more cumbersome process, and inaugurations take on much of the pageantry and solemnity of coronations, but with a distinctly democratic cast. From the time George Washington graciously made way for John Adams, transitions have symbolized peaceful turnovers of power. To populations still living under dictatorships, they showcase the best of

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American democracy and demonstrate the virtues of self-government. This may be what John F. Kennedy had in mind when he rightly termed the inaugural ceremony a "celebration of freedom."

Not all turnovers of power, though, proceeded as smoothly as the first. It took some time before the public display of it, at least, came off without a major hitch, controversy, or mutual embarrassment. John Adams, for instance, was so depressed at his defeat at the hands of his vice president, Thomas Jefferson, that he refused to attend his successor's inauguration. He spent the transition, up to its final hours, trying to tie Jefferson's hands in as many ways as possible. He rammed appointments through the lame duck Congress as fast he could, leading to the coining of a new phrase, the "midnight judge."

After Abraham Lincoln was elected president in a four-way contest with 39 percent of the vote, outgoing president James Buchanan sat idly by as state after state seceded from the union. By refusing to act, he actually may have limited the options available to his successor to two: peaceful dissolution of the nation, or war.

While bitterness is still present during transitions, it is no longer fashionable to vent it.

A similar situation arose during the transition of 1932-33. This time the incoming president demurred. Wanting to preserve his options, President-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt refused to cooperate with the departing Herbert Hoover on a common strategy to combat the Great Depression. Hoover feared going it alone, lest Roosevelt later reverse him. Their frosty relationship as well as the stagnation it fostered led to passage of the Twentieth Amendment, the first provision of which shortened the transition period by advancing the date of the inauguration from March 4 to January 20.

The two principals of the next transition learned little from that experience. Angered at criticism President-elect Eisenhower had levied against his administration during the 1952 campaign, President Truman, in his congratulatory wire, offered to make the presidential plane available should Eisenhower still intend to "go to Korea." Ike, for his part, declined to visit with the Trumans en route to his inauguration.

While such bitterness is still present during transitions, it is no longer fashionable to vent it. Since 1960, both sides have taken pains to put on a common front to the rest of the world and the media. Whenever a new president has been elected, it has become customary for the outgoing and incoming chief executives to pose for photographers and pledge their full cooperation in transferring the reins of government. Two sets of advisers are named to facilitate the process. In the 70 days from election to inauguration, both sides, usually with the press echoing their words, pronounce the transition the "smoothest in history." Only after the passage of months or years will

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reporters and historians unravel what really transpired beneath all the spin.

Sometimes, as in the case of Ronald Reagan, advanced planning and preparation can enable a new president to, in the motto of his transition team, "hit the ground running." Reagan had been stating precisely what policies he thought were best for the country in speeches he had been delivering in two decades prior to his election. In this way, Reagan was following in the footsteps of earlier activist presidents. In his memoirs, Franklin Roosevelt's speechwriter, Samuel Rosenman, traced dozens of "New Deal" initiatives to speeches FDR had delivered in the 1932 campaign. A generation earlier, as a means of distinguishing his "new freedom" from Theodore Roosevelt's "new nationalism" approach to government, Woodrow Wilson's speeches outlined tax and regulatory policies that he would later sign into law. Although an "accidental" president, Lyndon Johnson operated in a similar manner, passing tax cuts and civil rights legislation in his early months in office and preparing the country in the campaign for what later became Medicare, Headstart, and a host of other "Great Society" measures.

Only after the passage of time will reporters and historians unravel what really transpired beneath all the spin.

Reagan used his time as a candidate and as president-elect to reintroduce himself to the public and key Washington actors and the nation and to prepare them for the changes he intended to make. He also avoided some of the pitfalls other presidents have fallen into. Bill Clinton was but the latest in a series of candidates who promised to cut the size of the White House staff. Once in office, he, like they, had to choose between breaking a campaign promise or undercutting his ability to tackle the issues he wanted to address. He may have wound up with the worst of all worlds. To keep his promise, his team made most of the cuts in the "drug czar's" office. This opened Clinton to charges that, rhetoric aside, he did not consider the office's mission much of a priority — not a good start for a president who had said as a candidate that he had "experimented" with but not inhaled marijuana. Clinton, like several of his predecessors, wound up "detailing" personnel from government agencies to the White House to work on issues where he wished to make his mark.

Reagan breathed new life into the old adage that "people are policy," with the caveat that positions become policy through procedure. He established those procedures during the transition. Given the ceaseless demands on a president's time and on that of his staff, this may be an administration's last time to set them.

Successful presidents like Reagan began to do so prior to their election. Yet not all candidates have the time or the inclination to do early planning.

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Many, so as to avoid appearing presumptuous, are reluctant to admit even thinking about post-election issues during campaigns. This past June, both the Bush and the Gore campaigns said no when a noted columnist inquired whether anyone in their camp was working on a possible transition. Of the four men who have served as president in the past quarter century, only Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan made post-election plans while candidates. Both assigned tasks to a trusted adviser, Carter to Jack Watson; Reagan to Ed Meese.

Watson had not participated heavily in the campaign. After the election, senior campaign officials started chipping away at his plan, eventually undoing much of it. Meese, by contrast, played a senior role in the campaign while he was planning for the transition, and he saw many of his plans implemented. If there is a lesson to be learned from their experience, it would be that future presidents need to decide whom they want to oversee their transition operation from start to finish and make certain all within their operation understand the director's intentions.

Both Watson and Meese advised their respective presidents-elect to decide early where they would spend their time during the transition, how they would answer routine congratulatory messages, and what use they would make of key advisers during the process. Questions of geography proved important to all recent transitions because they determined the atmosphere in which so many decisions take place.

Both Carter and Reagan stayed in their home states. One of the advantages Meese found in keeping the president-elect out of Washington during that period was that it enabled Reagan to avoid being seen as interfering with the work of the outgoing administration, especially in a time of ongoing crisis over hostages in Iran. Another was the likelihood of drawing less public scrutiny to the interviewing and vetting of potential nominees. John F. Kennedy, who divided his time between Georgetown, Palm Beach, and Hyannisport, joked about the problems of conducting a transition in a "fishbowl" of media scrutiny by describing how he intended to announce his choice for attorney general. He said he would open his front door at three or four in the morning and whisper, "It's Bobby."

The experience of the past 40 years suggests that those presidents who best used their transitions to prepare them to govern effectively focused clearly and early on four major areas: process, organization, building support for their programs, and management.

A process that works

SAVE FOR THOSE that followed the death or resignation of a president, most transitions have been one of two kinds. There have been "friendly" takeovers, those in which a president was succeeded by his vice president or another member of his party, and "unfriendly"

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takeovers, when the president of one party is followed by a president of another. Veterans of past transitions often refer to a third kind, a "hostile takeover." While this label cannot be applied to the Ford-to-Carter and the Carter-to-Reagan turnovers, it certainly can to that which transpired between Bush and Clinton.

Transitions have varied in the challenges they present to those participating in them. When there is a change of party, few political appointees of the outgoing administration expect to remain in their posts. President George Bush sent a letter to those he appointed, reminding them that, unless the new administration indicated otherwise, their employment terminated with the end of his term.

Presidents-elect have differed in how they chose political appointees at lower levels.

Mass exoduses such as these seldom occur when a sitting vice president is elected president, as was the case in 1988, and may be again this year. The "friendliness" of such transitions allows the new president the luxury of time in which to consider whom he wishes to serve where. It also presents the potential for misunderstandings and hurt feelings as people who served the former president, many of whom have worked with the incoming president and his team, and are expecting to remain, end up being replaced. A familiar complaint still heard in Republican and conservative circles is how the "Bushies fired all the Reagan people."

Aside from the partisan differences inherent in them, all transitions are similar in some respects. Immediately upon their election, presidents-elect begin deciding whom they wish to serve in their administration. They find no shortage of people willing to provide suggestions: campaign workers, political contributors, members of Congress, governors, mayors, friends and relatives, friends of relatives and relatives of friends. Thousands of unsolicited resumes also pour in.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, political parties performed tasks that are today the preserve of the Office of Presidential Personnel. They regarded most positions whose occupants served at the pleasure of the president as "patronage" and filled them in a manner reminiscent of Andrew Jackson's spoils system. Presidents were more than happy to be relieved of the burden of placing people in jobs. That, though, was when the federal government was small both in size and in the impact it exerted over American life. As it took on more functions and its bureaucracy grew, so did the number of political appointees to oversee it and the number of hands involved in the process.

Beginning with the Kennedy administration, incoming presidents began to regard "staffing up" as more a matter of recruitment than screening. In

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addition to rewarding party and political service, they actively looked for talent that could help their administration.

Ronald Reagan broke new ground by retaining a professional "head hunter," Pendleton James, as director of personnel. James and his team began by putting together lists of likely cabinet and senior level officials. They also compiled lists of names of accomplished individuals who might be interested in serving in a Republican administration with a conservative orientation. At Reagan's direction, James devised five criteria potential Reagan appointees would have to meet, among which were integrity, competence, and commitment to the president's program. Other presidents gave their personnel directors different instructions. "Diversity" became an important watchword in the Clinton administration.

Presidents-elect have differed in how they chose political appointees at lower levels of their administrations. Kennedy, Nixon, and Carter allowed their cabinet secretaries to fill positions within their departments. Reagan, Bush, and Clinton exerted tighter control over hiring. Reagan presented cabinet secretaries with lists of names he found acceptable. The announcement that a president intends to appoint someone to a post is more of a beginning than an end to the "appointments process." There are forms to be completed, statutory ethical requirements to be met, background investigations to be done, and Senate confirmation hearings to prepare for.

C. Boyden Gray, former counsel to President Bush, advises future presidents-elect to start the "clearance" process almost immediately, by notifying the IRS and FBI of the names of the top people he intends to have in his administration even before he has decided which positions they will occupy. Such an approach carries the double advantage of speeding up the process and getting certain nominees confirmed before senators begin applying "holds" as a means of enhancing leverage. Had such a procedure been followed, many of the delays and complications that surrounded early Clinton appointees might have been avoided.

An effective organization

AMONG THE FIRST decisions a new president must make are those regarding who will serve as his principle aides in the White House and what kind of structure he wants to deploy to handle the flow of paper, information, and people in and out of the Oval Office. Usually the most important question a president-elect must answer is whom he wants as his chief of staff.

For almost half a century, almost every president has designated one senior adviser to organize and supervise the rest of the White House staff. Kennedy and Johnson functioned as their own chiefs of staff. Ford and Carter tried to as well. In the end, they gave up. The demands of the job had become too enormous to operate otherwise.

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The nation's earliest presidents got along with one or two "secretaries" or "clerks" to assist them. While their titles understated their roles, their primary functions were to assist the president with correspondence that came his way. The early presidential assistants were either relatives of the president (Jackson used his nephew), protégés (Meriwether Lewis in the case of Jefferson), or sons of close friends or political benefactors, such as John Hay, who was one of Lincoln's two secretaries. Aides such as these functioned as part of president's household and were paid with the president's personal funds. Many, like Hay, went on to become public figures in their own right in subsequent administrations. (He served as secretary of state under McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.)

The nation's earliest presidents got along with one or two "secretaries" to assist them.

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century presidents relied on men closer to them in age and experience. They performed chores that resemble those of modern chiefs of staff and press secretaries combined. Some like George Cortelyou (McKinley), William Loeb (T. Roosevelt), Joseph Tumulty (Wilson), and C. Bascom Slemp (Coolidge) wielded considerable powers.

Historians trace the birth of the "modern presidency" to actions Franklin D. Roosevelt undertook to assert managerial control over all the agencies and programs that had proliferated under his watch. In response to a commission's report, Congress passed legislation allowing the president to reorganize executive operations and to name six personal aides. The commission, headed by political scientist Louis Brownlow, suggested that those who would function as intermediaries between the president and department heads would "issue no orders, make no decisions, and emit no public statements" of their own. Ideal appointees, it said, "should be possessed of high competence, great physical vigor, and a passion for anonymity."

Contemporary observers recalled that when FDR read the last of these words, he "burst out laughing." A skillful bureaucratic in-fighter from his days as Woodrow Wilson's assistant secretary of the Navy, Roosevelt anticipated that aides he entrusted with unprecedented responsibilities would not remain "anonymous" for very long. Staffers such as Harry Hopkins, "Tommy the Cork" Corcoran, Samuel Rosenman, and Robert Sherwood became figures of influence and press attention, even though their power was derivative.

Roosevelt prevented his aides from building up fiefdoms by dividing responsibilities among his staff and awarding them overlapping jurisdictions. If there was a "first among equals," it was Harry Hopkins. Harry Truman functioned in a similar fashion, with Clark Clifford playing the Hopkins role. He came to depend on certain cabinet secretaries, such as Secretary of

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State George C. Marshall, whose knowledge and experience exceeded his own.

Dwight D. Eisenhower brought order, organization, and institutionalization to White House operations. "Organization cannot make a genius out of an incompetent," he would say, but "disorganization can scarcely fail to result in inefficiency and can easily lead to disaster." Many of his innovations have became permanent fixtures of Washington life. Eisenhower was the first to make full use of the elevated post of special assistant to the president for national security and a staff secretary to oversee the flow of National Security Council paperwork. He established the first Office of Congressional Relations, the Cabinet secretary to plan cabinet meetings and see that decisions were carried out, and the position of science advisor.

To direct the White House operation, Ike named former New Hampshire Gov. Sherman Adams "assistant to the president." His primary function was to supervise the rest of the White House and oversee the flow of paperwork, leaving the president free to concentrate on issues he felt deserved the most of his attention. White House operations became so "routine" under Eisenhower that, by the time he left office, stand-up comedians were joking about whether Ike or Adams was actually president — or whether it was any longer necessary to have one.

John F. Kennedy had a different operating style. He functioned as his own "chief of staff," in the parlance of presidential historian Richard Neustadt. Kennedy wanted no one in his entourage to grab as much power as had reverted to Adams. Kennedy's inner circle likened the system they had in place to a wheel with the president at the hub and advisors emanating out from there as the spokes. Ford and Carter later attempted to reproduce that model, but failed to make it work. Another Kennedy innovation was the centralization of policy within the Executive Branch inside the White House. This established in the public mind a direct connection between the president and the rest of the growing federal government.

Richard Nixon reverted to the system he had so closely observed as Eisenhower's vice president. He entered office wanting a strong chief of staff along lines established by Adams. His methods of operation, though, differed from those of his former boss in three respects, each of which contributed to the collapse of his presidency.

Eisenhower liked to work through his Cabinet and preferred getting information in oral briefings at which he could ask questions. He and Adams designed a structure that allowed him to spend much time in such settings. Nixon preferred to work alone. He spent much of his time poring over written materials and writing lengthy memoranda. He did not like conflict and avoided situations in which it might arise in his presence. He used his chief of staff as a shield to isolate him from people and situations. Nixon directed Haldeman to carry out detailed instructions in the manner in which he intended.

The memory of Haldeman, like that of Adams a generation earlier,

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prompted later presidents to dispense with a chief of staff. So did the circumstances that led to the two chiefs' fall from grace. (Adams resigned amid charges that he had used his influence to obtain favorable treatment from the IRS for a friend in return for gifts. Haldeman would serve time in prison for his role in the Watergate scandals.) A similar reaction set in after the departures of two future chiefs of staff, Donald Regan (under Reagan) and John Sununu (under Bush).

Ford started off with nine assistants all reporting directly to him. Eventually, he retained Donald Rumsfeld to "coordinate" policy and personnel and to take hold of Ford's schedule. When Richard B. Cheney succeeded him, he took on the previously retired "chief of staff" title. Cheney quickly established himself as an honest broker with no agenda of his own. He consciously adopted a "soft sell" manner, in direct contrast with the heavy-handed ways of Adams and Haldeman. In the spirit of Eisenhower, Cheney made sure that all who had an interest in a particular policy were consulted before the president acted.

Jimmy Carter began his term with eight aides reporting directly to him. Midway through, after delivering what became known as the "malaise" speech (after which he replaced half his Cabinet), Carter named his close aide, Hamilton Jordan, chief of staff. Jack Watson later succeeded him

Students of the presidency regard the methods of operation that Ronald Reagan adopted during his first term and that Bill Clinton put in place from his eighteenth month in office through his reelection as the most conducive to achieving presidential goals. The two systems differed in one important respect. Reagan chose to have a "troika" of three trusted advisers at the helm of his White House operation, whereas Clinton had a strong, but widely respected, chief of staff, Leon Panetta, operating in a mode reminiscent of Cheney. Though the duties of Reagan aides James A. Baker, Edwin Meese, and Michael Deaver varied — with Meese responsible for policy, Deaver for the president's image, and Baker for paper flow, scheduling, and personnel — it soon became apparent that as titular chief of staff, Baker too would function in traditional and anticipated ways. Both Baker and Panetta were seasoned Washington insiders, an experience they shared with other successful chiefs of staff before and since. Baker had held top positions in the previous two Republican administrations; Panetta had chaired the House Budget Committee and was Clinton's first director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Building bridges

NO PRESIDENT CAN HOPE to enact an agenda without public support. That support can translate into votes in the legislature and cooperation within bureaucracies. In order to obtain it, presidents have to have a clear and concise message as well as ways to communi-

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cate effectively to the public through the prevailing media. They also need to consider during their transitions how they will do that and to what degree the requirements of office are different from those of the campaign trail.

In the early days of the republic, that one-woman public relations operation, Dolley Madison, used her widely reported soirees as occasions to sell her husband's proposals. George Washington, James Monroe, and Andrew Jackson endured the inconveniences of traveling by coach to different parts of the country to develop a rapport with the public. Later presidents and all of the modern ones have tried similar methods to talk to the public "over the heads" of the Washington press "establishment."

While several presidents had help in drafting speeches, addresses, and correspondence, Warren Harding was the first to retain someone whose primary responsibility was as a ghostwriter. Although he worked for the president, Justin Welliver stayed on the payroll of one of the departments.

Franklin D. Roosevelt dropped this pretense when he established a new position at the White House for speechwriter Samuel Rosenman. Prior to World War II, this New York state judge had written for Roosevelt as a volunteer. When he came on board full time, he carried with him the newly created title "counsel to the president." Playwright Robert Sherwood later came in to assist him. The two worked in conjunction with Roosevelt's principal aide, Hopkins.

Roosevelt took an active role in the development of his speeches. He met with his writers often to set the direction and tone for his remarks and proved a skillful editor. To Roosevelt, speeches were both an opportunity to explain what he was doing in ways designed to attract support and occasions to forge policy within his administration. Because those who wrote them were involved in the policy process, they were able to develop clear and consistent themes. This pattern continued through several administrations, cresting with the synergistic relationship John F. Kennedy enjoyed with senior advisor and principal speechwriter Theodore C. Sorensen. It went into eclipse when Richard Nixon submerged the speechwriting function under the wider umbrella of "outreach and communications," but reemerged somewhat under Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton. Both understood how precise language could help persuade others of the merits of their proposals.

With the advent of the electronic age, presidents had to invest less personal energy to attract attention. The taciturn and less assertive Calvin Coolidge took to the airwaves often, to try to make his voice as recognizable to the public as those of popular entertainers. Franklin D. Roosevelt, through his "fireside chats," went a step further by creating the impression that he was "conversing" with his audience rather than reading formal addresses. John F. Kennedy showed similar mastery over the newer medium of television. The press conferences he pioneered gave audiences a chance to see the president "think in public." Sometimes, reporters functioned as "straight men" there to unleash the latest presidential witticism.

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Of those who followed Kennedy in office, Ronald Reagan was the most effective communicator. He was able to move public and world opinion in his direction through repetition of a well-crafted and articulated message through a variety of media. Through careful scheduling and the imposition of discipline, he drove much of the national agenda during his eight years in office.

One question the next president's experience may answer is whether it is possible for any president — even one with Reagan's skills — to replicate Reagan's success, given the changing communications environment. When Kennedy asked for air time, there were only three networks. In Reagan's there were four. In an era of multiple cable stations and the Internet, more and more people can tune presidents out. Presidents, like entertainers, must fight for ratings and can no longer be assured of free time. The 24-hour news cycle, some say, compels presidents to make more news. This subjects them to risks both of overexposure and of dramatizing the trivial.

Managing the government

CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS of any presidency is the ability of the president to see that the rest of the executive branch faithfully executes the law and carries out his administrative directives. He also has to take care to assure that the wheels of government turn as he intends them to.

As the head of the executive branch, the president presides over an extensive enterprise of agencies that perform vital functions and often have overlapping jurisdictions. Most presidents, even one as prone to pore over management manuals as Jimmy Carter, pronounced the managerial aspects of government "boring." President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a sense of humor about such matters, as he expressed in a memo to his budget director:

> I agree with the Secretary of the Interior. Please have it carried out so that fur-bearing animals remain in the Department of the Interior.
>
> You might find out if any Alaska bears are still supervised by a) War Department, b) Department of Agriculture, c) Department of Commerce. They have all had jurisdiction over Alaska bears in the past and many embarrassing situations have been created by the mating of a bear belonging to one Department with a bear belonging to another Department.
>
> P.S. I don't think the Navy is involved, but it may be. Check the Coast Guard. You never can tell.

In a more serious vein, Eisenhower unleashed his famous temper at an army general who gloated at the Navy Vanguard missile's failure to perform. One goal he never realized was ending interservice rivalries by merging their

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several branches into one.

The United States government employs millions of people; oversees a vast empire of buildings, property, and land; funds and often conducts research; issues millions of dollars' worth of contracts; and is a major purchaser of goods and services. Poor administration and oversight can, at the extreme, endanger national security. Incompetence or corruption can erode public confidence in an administration.

As they discharge the managerial responsibilities of the presidency, presidents must strike a balance between the career civil servants who have the professional training and institutional memory to perform tasks assigned them, and the political appointees who oversee them. They must also ensure, as Reagan did and Nixon and Carter did not, that those they appoint work to advance the president's interests.

All this requires making maximum use of persuasion and incentives that encourage mutual cooperation and loyalty. It also involves bringing to government management tools and practices that have proved effective in the private sector. This may prove exceptionally difficult, given the vested interests that have a stake in the status quo and the ability of opponents of change to make their voices heard at congressional inquiries and in the media.

The edge

PRESIDENTS AND PRESIDENTS-ELECT always have one key tool at their disposal: the aura of their office. Americans generally respect the institution of the presidency, the office itself, and the person elected to it. The president-elect is a popular figure whom Americans wish well, not least for their own sake.

But the aura is not enough. It can dissipate rather quickly. What successful presidents have known how to do is to lend that aura to their own skills as motivators — of their senior staff, of the bureaucracy, of the American people themselves. The presence of this quality is what most distinguishes a Jefferson from an Adams, a Roosevelt from a Hoover, and a Reagan from a Carter. Those who have achieved the most in office have been the ones who came into office the best prepared — in other words, those who made the maximum use of their transitions.

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Reagan's Real Reason For SDI

By MARK W. DAVIS

"But it is inconceivable to me that we can go on thinking down the future, not only for ourselves and our lifetime but for other generations, that the great nations of the world will sit here, like people facing themselves across a table, each with a cocked gun, and no one knowing whether someone might tighten their finger on the trigger."
— President Reagan, 1983

SEVENTEEN YEARS have passed since the fortieth president revealed his vision of a strategic missile defense to a national television audience. In those intervening years, from Ronald Reagan's first term to Bill Clinton's last term, the foreign and defense policies of the United States have remained hostage to a glacial domestic debate over national missile defense. Liberals remain hardened in their opposition to any sweeping "Star Wars" proposal, which they believe would offer little security, wreck the current arms control regime, and stimulate other nations to redouble their efforts to hit American cities. Conservatives, though they have scaled back much of Reagan's original plan, have made his basic idea the centerpiece of their vision for national defense in the twenty-first century. Though there is agreement between both major political parties to go for-

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ward with some defensive measures, U.S. policy makers and politicians remain so deeply divided over the issue of how far to go that it is far from clear that even the 2000 presidential election will break the policy stalemate.

Meanwhile, though the United States is far and away the most powerful nation in the world, the world is becoming more dangerous. Kashmir is now a nuclear flashpoint. North Korea has lobbed missiles over Japanese airspace. Within a few years or even months, it is likely that Asia will be girdled by nuclear powers, from Israel, just over the narrow expanse of Jordan to Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India, China, and North Korea. The bipartisan Rumsfeld Commission, after reviewing highly classified intelligence data, concluded in 1998 that North Korea alone could project a threat deep into the interior of the United States — an arc of vulnerability sweeping from Phoenix, Ariz., to Madison, Wisc. — in as little as five years.

It is time to move beyond the partisan fight and see how strategic defense and global arms control can work together.

For the most part, it has been Republicans who have worried about the national and personal implications of living in such a world. They have challenged the willingness of Democrats to trust the survival of American cities to the goodwill and rationality of dubious leaders in Baghdad, Tehran, Pyongyang, and elsewhere. They worry that American families are about to lose Franklin Roosevelt's "fourth freedom" — the freedom from fear. They believe that America's internationalist foreign policy will be blunted once small states can deter our forces and intimidate our leadership.

However, the GOP falls short by not providing a foreign policy context in which its defensive system would operate. Republicans have not come to grips with the likelihood that even at best, an advanced sea-based or space-based system would remain in constant technological competition with efforts to defeat it, and powerless before cost-effective biological warfare. They have not accepted that the value of such a system would remain dubious if, in the decades to come, Moscow and Beijing continue to respond to it as a mortal threat.

Republicans have faced up to some facts, but not to others. Republicans have been unwilling to explain how global efforts at nonproliferation would work within the context of a strategic defense. Their unwillingness to come to grips with the complexities of their vision renders the Republican approach somewhat chimerical.

It is time for both liberals and conservatives to move beyond the partisan choice between a strategic defense and global arms control to a discussion about how each can reinforce the other. The time has also come to think in the broadest terms — to seek ways to develop a strategic defense to protect

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all nations and thereby begin the long and arduous process of eliminating the threat of weapons of mass destruction to all civilization.

In the context of the current debate, such an ambitious framework will strike many as hopelessly utopian. We should remember, however, that using a strategic defense to impel the governments of the world to control and eliminate weapons of mass destruction is not a new idea. Rather, it is the forgotten part of the original strategic defense vision, an elaborate vision articulated by President Reagan and subsequently dismissed or forgotten, especially by those who most often invoke his name.

"Star Wars" and sarcasm

It is likely Bill Clinton intended to bait yet another overreaction from conservatives, complete with cries of "giving away the store" and "selling out" to a foreign power. Whatever his motive, President Clinton jammed every hot button in the conservative psyche when he recently hinted that he would share missile defense technology with Russia.

Many of today's Clinton-fatigued conservatives no longer remember that the first president to make this very offer was none other than Ronald Reagan. This lack of memory can be demonstrated in a casual survey of any number of current policy briefs from major conservative think tanks, or from floor speeches by Republican leaders in Congress.

This is, perhaps, understandable. Conservatives are acutely aware of the sorry record of foreign policy idealism and arms control. They remember that the moral blandishments of the 1920s (and perhaps the 1990s) only led to a more dangerous world. They have been jaded by a shrill opposition given to apocalyptic claims, from the neo-Malthusian Club of Rome to a nuclear freeze movement that almost undermined NATO strategy.

As a result, the national defense side of Reagan's plan has been adopted by conservatives, while the more idealistic, global defense portion has been discarded. Extensive attention is given in conservative literature to defending the American continent and close allies. It is hard to find any mention today of Reagan's idea of sharing it with potentially hostile powers.

If the right is dismissive toward Reagan's proposal, the left is cruel. *In Way Out There in the Blue*, Frances FitzGerald resorts to flights of literary rhetoric about the Bible, movie imagery and "post-modernist symbolism" to embellish her denigration of strategic defenses as "Reagan's greatest triumph as an actor-storyteller."

Several biographers suggest that the seeds of Reagan's idea were actually planted by his starring role in *Murder in the Air*, a 1940 cliffhanger in which he portrayed a secret agent with an "Inertia Projector" capable of bringing down fleets of enemy planes with electrical currents. Lou Cannon speculates at length over the influences science fiction may have had on Reagan's think-

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ing, and attributes to Colin Powell an assertion that the president was influenced by the anti-war homily delivered by the alien in *The Day the Earth Stood Still.*

It is true that Reagan had a fantastic vision of sharing missile defense technology to create a nuclear-free world. In his memoirs, Reagan complains: "Some of my advisors, including a number at the Pentagon, did not share this dream. They couldn't conceive of it. They said that a nuclear-free world was unattainable and it would be dangerous for us even if it were possible; some even claimed nuclear war was 'inevitable' and we had to prepare for this reality. They tossed around macabre jargon about 'throw weights' and 'kill ratios' as if they were talking about baseball scores."

Lou Cannon quotes Robert McFarlane calling strategic defense "the Sting."

The initial reaction of Richard Perle, Reagan's own assistant secretary of defense, was to call the idea of a multi-layered space defense "the product of millions of American teenagers putting quarters into video machines."

Lou Cannon quotes National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane as calling strategic defense "the Sting," a con job in which Reagan would secure deep cuts in the Soviet arsenal by trading away a research project of dubious value. Reagan's arms negotiator Paul Nitze gave a speech in 1985 that undermined the president's proposal with criteria of cost and survivability that no research program could meet. Michael Deaver, always close to Nancy Reagan, reported that the first lady implored the president "not to push Star Wars at the expense of the poor and dispossessed."

Strobe Talbott, then a journalist, opined that strategic defenses would spark "unceasing competition without stability." Sen. Ted Kennedy's staff slapped Reagan's program with the dismissive moniker, "Star Wars," a theme recycled by Soviet negotiators as "space strike arms." Soviet leader Yuri Andropov called Reagan's idea "irresponsible" and "insane."

Conservatives have since come around to the implicit sanity of a national strategic defense. When it comes to the global implications of Reagan's proposal, however, most conservatives differ from liberals only to the degree to which their contempt is vocal.

Listening to Reagan

In the face of such universal rejection, it is startling, then, to review Reagan's remarks during the middle years of his presidency. Dozens of speeches and interviews offer a portrait of a man who, though lacking the terminology of the professional policy maker, was far from the addled dreamer so often portrayed. In dozens of forums, Reagan

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strenuously advanced a worldview based on serious ideas of astonishing scope.

Agree or disagree, Ronald Reagan's ideas deserve better than to be so thoroughly ignored in the current national debate.

Reagan worried about a future in which many countries would possess the ability to deter or even destroy his country. His solution was to turn U.S. deterrence doctrine upside-down, to shift to defensive technologies that he hoped to extend to the entire world. A skeptic of traditional arms control, he believed that a global defensive system could goad reluctant powers into a commonality of interests. He sought to forge a realistic confidence with which humanity would be able to turn its back on nuclear weapons for all time. To put it in contemporary terms, Reagan believed the hardware of technology could strengthen the software of diplomacy.

Reagan believed the hardware of technology could strengthen the software of diplomacy.

The role movies may have played in his thinking is purely speculative. It is, however, a matter of fact that as a newly elected governor, Reagan was briefed by one of the giants of modern physics, Edward Teller, on defensive technologies at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in 1967. Martin Anderson has vividly described Reagan's 1979 visit to the NORAD's Cheyenne Mountain complex, and how troubled he was by the powerlessness of a system that could detect impending annihilation but do nothing to stop it. As a presidential candidate in 1980, Reagan was lobbied on missile defenses by Wyoming Sen. Malcolm Wallop.

When the president finally unveiled his concept in a March 23, 1983 national television address, it was the result of meticulous preparation in secret White House meetings between the national security staff, the president's science advisor, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It was only after this review that the president felt confident enough to tell the American people, "I've become more and more deeply convinced that the human spirit must be capable of rising above dealing with other nations and human beings by threatening their existence."

In many of his subsequent remarks, Reagan worried about the long-term dangers of nuclear confrontation. "We can't lock ourselves into a fatalistic acceptance of a world held in jeopardy." He spoke in worried tones about the future, seeing simple deterrence ("the sword of Damocles that has hung over our planet for too many decades") as a strategy eventually doomed to fail at the hands of a Third World madman. "This doesn't make sense," he told editors and broadcasters in 1986, "in a world where madmen can come along as one did half a century, almost, ago — Adolf Hitler." Far from being a movie-intoxicated ignoramus, Reagan seemed to have a grasp of the catastrophic potential of human history that eluded his learned advisors.

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President Reagan understood that achieving a comprehensive strategic response to this threat would tax the best efforts of our leaders and the fortitude of our people. Many have fairly criticized him for slipping into simplistic talk of a space "shield" or a national "roof." It is perhaps true that Reagan "talked down" when he should have "talked up." His critics should also acknowledge, however, that Reagan often spoke in realistic terms of diligence in science and diplomacy.

"It will take years," he said, "probably decades of effort on many fronts. There will be failures and setbacks, just as there will be successes and breakthroughs. . . . But isn't it worth every investment necessary to free the world from the threat of nuclear war? We know it is." He leaves us with words to remember every time the media trumpet the latest failure of a strategic defense test or a budget hawk complains about the cost.

As a Republican aide living in Washington during those balmy years, I well remember the passion — even urgency — with which the president sold his plan. "It is not a bargaining chip," he asked a gathering of GOP operatives to believe. Few of us did.

Ronald Reagan soldiered on before audiences indifferent to his ideas, speaking in idealistic ways that would be dismissed as infantile goo-gooism if uttered by a president today. In an August 1985 press conference, he asserted that such a defense should go beyond protecting America and protect "the people of this planet." In a September press conference, he spoke more explicitly:

> I'm sorry that anyone ever used the appellation Star Wars for it because it isn't that. It is purely to see if we can find a defensive weapon so that we can get rid of the idea that our deterrence should be the threat of retaliation, whether from the Russians toward us or us toward them, of the slaughter of millions of people by way of nuclear weapons.

Reagan added that such a shared defense would be the first step to "realistically eliminate these horrible offensive weapons — nuclear weapons — entirely." In this one statement, the president suggested a willingness to repudiate the central doctrine of U.S. defense policy — deterrence — while seeking to go far beyond any arms reductions agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons outright.

It was a stunning, breathtaking departure from the past. And it went almost virtually unnoticed. The media downplayed it. The president's advisers ignored it. Some of the president's supporters (and, it seemed at times, his official spokesmen) seemed embarrassed, as if he had wandered into a gaffe instead of making a ringing declaration.

Yet in an October press conference, Reagan further decoupled his vision from a purely national defense. He said, "Such a defense-oriented world would not be to any single nation's advantage, but would benefit all." In the same month, the president devoted a radio address to asking Americans to support "a balance of safety, as opposed to a balance of terror." He went to

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the United Nations to plead for a world effort to "escape the prison of mutual terror."

Protecting the national interest

OF COURSE, Reagan never turned his back on the national interest. He was determined to go ahead and develop his Strategic Defense Initiative over any Soviet veto. He told the press that the "research and testing of SDI would move us toward our ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons altogether from the face of the Earth." But, he cautioned, "by necessity, this is a very long-term goal. For years to come we will have to continue to base deterrence on the threat of nuclear retaliation."

Reagan's notable arms control breakthroughs were propelled not by moral blandishment, but by a determination to match other powers weapon for weapon, a foreign policy that embraced Hobbes's dictum, "covenants without swords are but words." This was the approach Reagan demonstrated in his willingness to match Soviet SS-20s with Pershing IIs. Reagan's tough approach on intermediate-range weapons elicited horror from the arms control community. But his confrontational negotiating style, sharpened by his experience as a former labor negotiator, turned out to be the path to the verifiable elimination of a whole class of nuclear weapons.

In a similar way, Reagan believed his Strategic Defense Initiative would provide the pressure for nations to act and the "vital insurance" to maintain strategic stability in the midst of deep reductions. He did not lose his sense of realism. He saw strategic defense as a new kind of sword for a new kind of covenant.

The president made it clear in a BBC interview that he had thought through how his new world order would unfold. Once a strategic defense was developed, Reagan said he would extend it to the allies, and then the Soviet Union, as the first stage in a graduated program from offensive to defensive weapons, culminating in the total, *verifiable* elimination of nuclear arsenals. A transcript shows the following exchange.

> *BBC interviewer:* Are you saying then, Mr. President, that the United States, if it were well down the road towards a proper SDI program, would be prepared to share its technology with Soviet Russia, provided, of course, there were arms reductions and so on on both sides?
>
> *Reagan:* That's right. There would have to be the reductions of offensive weapons. In other words, we would switch to defense instead of offense.

In the same interview, Reagan looked ahead to our day, when the genie of nuclear proliferation would be far out of the bottle. The reason for having defensive weapons, Reagan said, is because "everyone in the world knows how to make one, a nuclear weapon—we would all be protected in case

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some madman, some day down along the line, secretly sets out to produce some with the idea of blackmailing the world."

When his plan was attacked from the left, Reagan spoke contemptuously of the doctrine that governs us to this very day, saying, "MAD stands for mutual assured destruction, but MAD is also a description of what the policy is."

Many of his aides still did not take him at his word, or believe he meant it. They were fully prepared for him to accept Mikhail Gorbachev's offer at the Reykjavik summit of deep cuts in exchange for gutting research on strategic defenses. They were not prepared for him to walk out. "And had Reagan been the passive creature popularly depicted," Edwin Meese recalls in his memoirs, "the offer would have been accepted on the spot, SDI would have been eliminated." As eager as he was for deep arms reductions, Reagan was steadfast in linking any disarmament to the "insurance" of strategic defenses.

Even after his unmistakable show of principle in Iceland, many of Reagan's admirers continued to misunderstand him, applauding him for his cynical SDI ploy to this day. Liberals — this time, his natural allies — let their antipathy for Reagan paint them into the corner of defending "MAD-ness." Rereading the president's words today, one sees that his tone had grown plaintive, as if for the first time in his life he was playing to an empty house.

A commonwealth of secure states

THE NEXT PRESIDENT would do well to avoid the trap of reflexive opposition to Clinton's vague revival of Reagan's idea. The better opportunity for him would be to define sharp differences of implementation. Like Reagan, the next president should make it clear that there will be no Russian (and now Chinese) veto on development and deployment. The offer made by Vice President Al Gore to defend all 50 states, but in "a way that does not destroy the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty," is simply oxymoronic. The next president should demonstrate that the United States is prepared to renegotiate all arms control agreements to make them subordinate to our overall strategic vision. In short, the next president also has an opportunity to enact a radical rethinking of all our priorities. He could challenge conservatives to think globally, to link our continental defense to a solution that addresses the anxieties of our allies, and eventually, those of Russia, China, and other states. He could challenge the foreign policy establishment to undertake a diplomatic effort of unprecedented scope.

If such a challenge seems overwhelming, perhaps he could draw inspiration from Reagan's ability to stay focused on the long view. Former chief of staff Donald Regan, often no admirer of his boss, nevertheless caught the essence of Reagan's approach when he wrote that the president "believed

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that large questions were easier to resolve than small ones, and that the big answers usually contained all the smaller answers within it."

Above all, the next president should keep in mind Reagan's governing maxim, "trust but verify." Radical cuts would depend on a highly intrusive inspection regime of unprecedented scope and depth. The appointment book style of current international inspections could not be tolerated. Nations that do agree to such a thorough and mutually verifiable regimen of inspections, reductions, and continuous monitoring would come under the umbrella of defensive technologies. Those that choose to remain on the outside would run the risk of falling behind and becoming vulnerable to one another.

Would many nations accept? It is important to keep in mind the coercive power Reagan's concept exerts to this very day. The mere threat of a strategic defense was as least as central in forcing the Soviet Union to negotiate as his willingness to deploy Pershing II missiles. Even the sharply limited plan of the Clinton administration elicits hysterical reactions from Moscow and Beijing today. Though a comprehensive defense may be impossible, the strategic defense proposal still has the power to intimidate nations. As such a proposal, it is a source of distrust among nations. As a reality, if implemented in a sober and pragmatic way, its power could be used to create a widening circle of trust and mutual security.

Even the limited plan of the Clinton administration elicits hysterical reactions from Moscow and Beijing today.

The next president should modernize Reagan's plan well beyond missile defense, to respond to a widening array of other kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Such a shared defense could include the sharing of intelligence, early warning assets, and the technology of border defense, as well as cooperation in anti-terrorism efforts. It could also include the joint development of new vaccines against biological warfare and the sharing of technologies dedicated to defending against any exotic security threats that might arise in the twenty-first century.

For decades, many nations would doubtlessly choose to remain outside this defensive commonwealth. That, too, would serve a useful purpose. It would identify and isolate scofflaws, those nations that pursue weapons of mass destruction purely for advantage and power, and not for security. A sufficient deterrent would have to be retained, one enhanced and stabilized by strategic defenses. Eventually, however, a mixture of fear and the ceaseless quest for security should goad most nations into joining this arrangement. Once a part of it, they would become equal members of a commonwealth of safety.

Such a plan would also address the central weakness of the current American nonproliferation policy — our hypocrisy. On the one hand, we

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hold that massive deterrence is fine and necessary for the United States. We do not question our need or right to keep a fleet of submarines at sea, each with enough firepower to incinerate 300 cities. On the other hand, we incessantly preach to New Delhi and Islamabad that they need not worry about what their neighbors are doing down the Indus, much less what is going on in China, Russia, or Iran.

Reagan anticipated that the moral underpinnings of a bipolar world, no less than its strategic assumptions about deterrence, would be inadequate for the future. He spoke openly and candidly about wanting to replace a purely national defense with a growing commonality of states that ensure and bolster each other's security. If this circle could be widened enough, and verification deployed deeply enough, mankind could then realistically dream of working toward a world without weapons of mass destruction.

"Appease the weak"

If Reagan seems naïve, perhaps we would do well to recall the words of another misremembered conservative icon, Winston Churchill. Those most given to invoking his memory often betray no awareness that in his second premiership, Churchill spent his fading powers in a vain but valiant attempt to resolve the Cold War. Regarding the Soviets, Churchill said we should not be "in too much of a hurry to believe that nothing but evil emanates from this mighty branch of the human family, or that nothing but danger and peril could come out of this vast ocean of land in a single circle so little known and understood."

Churchill's statement about the Soviet Union could be applied now with equal merit to today's Russia, China, and Islamic fundamentalist states. True, they cherish weapons of mass destruction because the weapons confer power status they would otherwise not enjoy. True, it would be dangerous to ignore the unpredictability of states undergoing a painful transition. It is also true that whether we like it or not, these regimes face security dilemmas of their own.

Both Churchill and Reagan believed in the vigorous engagement of such weaker states. Once they had gained the upper hand, each went from being a warrior to being a peacemaker. Every student of history knows of Churchill's savage disparagement of the appeasement policy toward Hitler. Fewer remember that Churchill, as leader of the opposition two years after the death of Hitler, said that the "word 'appeasement' is not popular, but appeasement has its place in all policy. Make sure you put it in the right place. Appease the weak, defy the strong." ("Magnanimity" was another watchword of Churchill's, taken from his study of Lincoln, that struck at the same theme.)

Conservatives well remember Reagan's defiance of the Soviet Union, and his necessary definition of its last, dangerous push for expansion as an "evil

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empire." Few now recall that as the Soviet threat weakened, Reagan made strenuous efforts to engage — Churchill might have called it showing magnanimity to — the Russian people. Reagan did not change principles. He changed strategies when it became clear that the Soviet Union would soon no longer be an empire, nor necessarily a force for evil.

It was, of course, Churchill who first gave wide currency to Reagan's watchwords, "peace through strength." Both men were optimists, yet neither could be accused of succumbing to utopianism. Like Churchill before him, Reagan had won his fame by alerting his countrymen to the dangers of naïve idealism.

In the middle of his presidency, Ronald Reagan had not grown soft in mind or heart. He was simply looking to the horizon, to a world in which many nations would possess nuclear weapons. He understood this would be a crisis unprecedented in human history, one requiring a hard idealism and unprecedented statesmanship.

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Making the Most Of the Surplus

By PETER J. FERRARA

THE PROJECTED FEDERAL budget surplus continues to grow. For the current fiscal year, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects the total surplus to finish around $232 billion, with $148 billion produced by the Social Security account, and $84 billion outside of Social Security. The non-Social Security surplus is projected to grow to over $100 billion in the next fiscal year, and to reach $377 billion by 2010. Over the next 10 years, the non-Social Security surplus alone is projected to total almost $2.2 trillion, with another $2.4 trillion in Social Security surpluses, for a total surplus over this period of $4.56 trillion.

Beginning about three years ago, as the prospect of these budget surpluses arose, different reform camps raised three big economic policy ideas that would be far easier to implement because of those surpluses. One was simply to pay off the national debt. This goal has substantial appeal among grass-roots conservatives, and this has been reflected in support for it among congressional Republicans. Interestingly, this option has also become the centerpiece of the economic platforms of President Clinton and now Presidential candidate Al Gore. Indeed, Clinton and Gore propose to use even the Social Security surpluses to pay off the reported, net, national debt, now totaling about $3.4 trillion.

Supply-siders, conservatives, free market libertarians, and many other

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Republicans have advocated a second course — a major tax cut. Many from among these same groups, as well as some moderate Democrats and leaders from minority communities, have advocated a third alternative — a personal investment account option for Social Security.

While all three of these possibilities appeal to many people, there is a conflict between them, for if the surplus is used for one, it can't be used for the others. For Social Security reform, the surpluses would greatly help to finance promised benefits during the transition, as workers start paying at least some of the payroll taxes into personal accounts instead of Social Security. The more of the total surplus devoted to Social Security reform, including the surplus within Social Security itself, the bigger the personal account option can be.

By contrast, the more of the surplus devoted to paying off the national debt, the more it can be reduced and the more quickly it can be paid off. And the more that is devoted to cutting taxes, the bigger the tax cut can be.

An easy political answer would be to devote one third of the total surplus to each of these three reforms. But that would be a leadership cop-out, for the reforms are not nearly equivalent in terms of the benefits they would produce. In particular, a personal account option for Social Security would produce far, far greater benefits than paying off the national debt. Tax cuts would produce benefits as well, and would complement personal Social Security accounts. In fact, paying off the national debt may well be counterproductive.

Pay off the debt?

Seen in its best light, paying off the national debt would increase savings and thereby promote economic growth. If the government used a billion dollars to buy and retire federal bonds, the former bondholders would then have an extra billion dollars to invest in private capital markets. To the extent that tax revenues came out of consumption rather than savings, private savings and investment would consequently be increased. A second benefit from this policy would be to reduce and ultimately eliminate federal spending on debt interest, now running at about $220 billion per year.

But the problem is that running a budget surplus until the national debt is paid off requires keeping taxes higher than they otherwise need to be. The higher taxes would harm economic growth, probably much more than paying down the debt would help.

We have powerfully convincing experience from the 1920s, 1960s, and 1980s as to how strongly tax cuts can enhance economic growth. This is supported by foreign experience as well, and a by-now vast literature of economic studies. There is no equivalent literature or experience supporting a payoff of the national debt.

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Indeed, quite to the contrary, Keynesian economics continues to be the reigning orthodoxy in liberal/left dominated academia. And under Keynesian analysis, running a budget surplus to pay down the debt would slow the economy. Under supply-side analysis, the higher-than-necessary taxes to maintain the surplus would slow the economy as well, creating the obverse of the economic gains from tax cut policies in the 1920s, '60s, and '80s.

Another problem is that our nation's monetary policy is conducted through the sale and purchase of federal bonds by the Federal Reserve. The Fed buys such bonds with newly printed money to increase the money supply and sells the bonds to the public for cash to reduce the money supply. Yet, with no national debt, there would be no federal bonds to buy and sell. Private capital markets also now rely on federal bonds for diversification and a safe harbor for short-term money, in addition to using the market rates on such bonds as benchmarks.

Finally, as a matter of politics, trying to pay off the national debt is more likely to be a snare and a delusion. With that surplus money lying around in Washington, voracious special interests will come up with one spending emergency after another year after year to spend the surplus funds. Those trying to preserve the surpluses to pay off the debt will always appear as cold-hearted accountants in the face of these various teary-eyed demands.

Indeed, the left has transparently embraced paying off the debt to keep all that tax money in Washington until spending is politically safe again. In other words, Clinton and Gore have adopted paying off the debt as their economic mantra precisely to short-circuit the political appeal of a major tax cut. But the rapidly escalating spending agenda offered by Gore and his left-liberal allies raises questions about how sincere they are in following through on this promise. During years of liberal domination, Congress routinely promised to restrain spending (usually to win passage of tax increases). But the spending continued more or less unabated. The promise to pay down the debt could be Lucy holding the football for Charlie Brown again.

By the end of the next fiscal year, before any new policies could become effective, the net federal debt will fall to about 31 percent of GDP. Net federal debt equaled 80 percent of GDP in 1950 and 46 percent in 1960. The federal debt is *not* currently an economic problem, and trying to pay it off may do more harm than good.

A real tax cut

By contrast, our tax code is currently a problem. Returns to saving and investment are taxed at least four times, through the personal income tax, the corporate income tax, the capital gains tax, and the inheritance tax. Investment is also the only business expense that cannot be deducted in the year the cost is incurred. Instead, the invest-

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ment must be depreciated over several years.

In addition, the top marginal tax rate has been increased by close to 50 percent since the Reagan years. Wage growth and inflation are also increasing taxes by pushing workers into higher brackets. Federal taxes are now over 20 percent of GDP, the highest level since World War II. Indeed, they are about the same level as in 1944 and 1945, when we were in a life and death struggle with Nazi Germany and imperial Japan.

Abolishing the death tax, reducing or eliminating the capital gains tax, and cutting marginal tax rates would reduce the harsh discriminatory tax burden on savings and investment. Both should consequently rise substantially. Such tax relief would also increase the incentives generally for work, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking.

All of which would be a potent tonic for further increasing our economic growth as well as perpetuating it over the long term. As the increased savings and investment lead to increased productivity, wages would grow faster and new jobs would be created, expanding and deepening the economic boom to include more and more people. Again, both experience and the economic literature indicate that the economic benefits of such tax relief are likely to be far greater than the results from trying to pay off the national debt.

Finally, a major tax cut would produce the added benefit of allowing taxpayers to keep more of their own money. It is too often overlooked that this means more freedom as well as more prosperity. With reduced taxes, people have more freedom of control over their own incomes, and freedom of choice as to how to spend the fruits of their own labor. This is a central attribute of a free society.

A personal account option

THE THIRD ALTERNATIVE, however, a personal account option for Social Security, would produce truly overwhelming benefits. When considering Social Security, the initial reaction is to think of the program's well documented long-term financing problems. But that is not the biggest problem facing the program, not by a long shot.

The biggest problem with Social Security is that even if it somehow pays all of its promised benefits, the program would still be a bad deal for today's workers. These workers would now get far higher returns and benefits saving and investing through personal accounts in place of Social Security, as workers are increasingly doing in other countries around the world. As a result, such personal accounts would directly and substantially increase the prosperity of working people.

In *A New Deal for Social Security* (Cato Institute, 1998), Michael Tanner and I show how big a difference this would make. Take the example of a husband and wife entering the work force in 1985, each earning the average

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income each year for their entire careers. What would happen if this couple could save and invest in the private sector what they and their employers would otherwise pay into Social Security?

We account in the study for private life and disability benefits to replace Social Security survivor and disability benefits. We also account for administrative costs, and show how the transition to the new system could be financed without undermining the workers' private retirement benefits.

At a 4 percent real rate of return on such investments, which is just over half the average return earned in the stock market over the past 75 years, the couple would retire with almost $1 million in today's dollars. That fund would pay them more out of continuing investment returns alone than Social Security promises but cannot pay, while allowing them to leave the almost $1 million to their children. Or the funds could be used to buy an annuity paying them over three times what Social Security promises.

At a 6 percent real return, the couple would retire with $1.6 million in today's dollars. That fund would pay them about three times as much as promised by Social Security, while allowing them to leave the entire $1.6 million to their children. Or it would finance an annuity paying them seven times what Social Security promises, but cannot pay.

Even low income workers who receive special subsidies would receive much more in benefits from the personal investment accounts.

The same is true for all workers today — all income levels, family combinations, ethnic groups. Rich or poor, black or white, married or single, with children or without, one earner couple or two earner couple, even low income workers who receive special subsidies through Social Security would receive much more in benefits from the personal investment accounts.

Take the example of a low-income couple with two children. Husband and wife enter the workforce in 1985 and each earn the equivalent of no more than today's minimum wage each year throughout their careers. Through the personal investment account, at a 4 percent real return, the couple would retire with a fund of $375,400 in today's dollars. The couple could use this fund to buy an annuity that would pay them 2.44 times what Social Security promises but cannot pay. Or the couple could use part of the fund to buy an annuity matching what Social Security promises, while leaving $220,000 to their children.

At a 6 percent real return, this low income couple would retire with a trust fund of almost $700,000 ($693,395) in today's dollars. That fund would pay them more than twice (2.26 times) what Social Security promises out of the continuing returns alone, while allowing them to leave almost $700,000 to their children. Or they could use the funds to buy an annuity

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that would pay them 5.46 times what Social Security promises but cannot pay.

Quite similar results have been found in studies by The Heritage Foundation, the National Center for Policy Analysis, and others. These vastly greater benefits would result not because the private sector would make better investments than Social Security. They result because Social Security makes no real investments at all. Social Security is a tax and redistribution scheme in which almost all taxes paid today are immediately paid out to current beneficiaries on a pay-as-you-go basis. The private, invested system, by contrast, pours its funds into real private capital investment that produces new income and wealth. That increased income and wealth is what finances the far higher returns and benefits of the private system.

Lightening the payroll tax burden through such reform would further increase jobs, wages, and growth.

If such personal accounts were adopted and expanded quickly enough, they would also avert the long-term Social Security financing crisis, without raising taxes or cutting benefits. The government's own annual reports indicate that paying all promised Social Security benefits to young workers entering the work force today would require raising the Social Security payroll tax by 50-100 percent. That would increase the current 12.4 percent total Social Security tax rate, including both the employer and employee shares, to around 18-24 percent.

But if workers in the future were relying primarily on personal accounts rather than Social Security, this long-term financing crisis would be averted. Workers would then receive the better benefits from the fully funded personal accounts instead. Indeed, because the private investment returns earned by those accounts would be so much higher than Social Security, the required payments into those accounts could be substantially reduced, providing an effective payroll tax cut.

The personal account option would also expand and enhance economic growth. Increased savings through the accounts would increase capital, productivity, wages, job creation, and overall economic growth. Lightening the payroll tax burden through such reform would further increase jobs, wages, and growth. In a pathbreaking article in the *American Economic Review*, Harvard economics professor Martin Feldstein, chairman of the National Bureau of Economic Research, estimated that the present value of the future economic gains from a full personal account system would be $10 trillion to $20 trillion. In other words, shifting fully to such a system would produce a gain equivalent to increasing America's total wealth today by this amount.

All of these benefits would be most important to lower income workers. They most need the higher returns and benefits they would gain from personal accounts. They are also most in need of the general economic benefits

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of the reform. They most need the new jobs, higher wages, and faster economic growth that would result.

Moreover, averting the long-term Social Security financing crisis through the reform will also be most important to lower income workers. They can least afford the higher taxes or reduced benefits that will otherwise be necessary if we stay on our current course.

Most important, it's only through reform that these workers will have a chance to participate in the booming capital markets. Indeed, that will be true for blue collar workers overall, most blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities, and in general the bottom half of the population in income. These workers do not have the income to participate in the 401(k)s, IRAs, and stock options that upper income workers are using to participate in the capital market boom. Consequently, they are just falling farther and farther behind.

It's only through reform that these workers will have a chance to participate in the booming capital markets.

With personal accounts, these lower income workers would also become capitalists as well as laborers. The result would be a more equal distribution of wealth as well as income. Indeed, an earlier study by Feldstein indicated that a full personal account system would reduce the nation's concentration of wealth by one half. For those on the left evangelizing today about a wealth gap in America, the solution is a personal investment account option for Social Security. Indeed, this is the only viable, productive means of achieving their goal.

Ultimately, through this reform, the socialist dream of the nation's workers owning its business and industry would be effectively achieved. But the result is not likely to be what the socialists envisioned. As the nation's workers become capitalists, support for pro-growth, free market policies will increase throughout society. The result will be a political revolution creating greater general prosperity for everyone.

But even this is not all. A full, personal account option would ultimately eliminate the current unfunded liability of Social Security, totaling about $9.5 trillion, as worker's future benefits would be financed through their fully funded personal accounts, rather than unfunded Social Security. Social Security's unfunded liability is not recognized as part of the reported national debt. But it is, nevertheless, a real government debt which must be paid by future taxpayers absent fundamental reform. As a result, such reform would eliminate far more real government debt than paying off the national debt. Indeed, this would be the greatest reduction in government debt in history.

A full, private account option would also ultimately involve a huge tax cut. Social Security taxes account for about one-fourth of total federal taxes. Through the reform, these funds would be paid into private personal

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accounts, with part perhaps kept by workers, rather than paid to the government in taxes. As a result, federal taxes would be cut by close to one-fourth. This would be the biggest reduction in taxes in world history.

Moreover, with retirement, survivors, and disability benefits eventually privately financed under the reform, federal spending would be sharply reduced as well. With an eventual, full, private option, federal spending would ultimately be reduced by about one-fourth. This would be the biggest reduction in government spending in world history. Quite simply, the significance and magnitude of this reform dwarfs all others.

The bottom line

THE GREAT SURPLUS DEBATE has now become central to the presidential election. Al Gore has come out foursquare for paying off the national debt, and is unalterably opposed to a major tax cut and a personal account option for Social Security. George W. Bush, by contrast, has made a major tax cut and a personal Social Security account option the centerpieces of his economic platform, although he has not ruled out some further reduction in the national debt. Bush's framework is to use the Social Security surplus to cover the personal account reform, and the non-Social Security surplus to cover the tax cut and some other initiatives, including possibly some continuing reduction in the reported national debt.

This framework would allow for a healthy personal account option. Instead of allowing workers only a choice of putting a small specified portion of the payroll tax into the personal accounts, such as 2 percentage points of the total 12.4 percent tax, workers could be allowed a range of options. They could, for example, be allowed to put from 1 to 6 percentage points of the total tax into the accounts.

Assuming that not everyone will choose to exercise the maximum 6 percent option from day one, which will certainly be the case, then the Social Security surplus alone may be sufficient to cover just such an option for years into the future. Eventually, the shift of taxes into the personal accounts would be offset by the shift of Social Security benefit obligations to those accounts as well.

Ultimately, we must be careful not to view the projected surpluses as a limit to reform rather than an opportunity. There is no reason that the tax cut and the personal Social Security account option has to be limited by the amount of the projected surplus. If greater reforms than the surpluses can accommodate are desirable, they can be achieved by further restraining the growth of federal spending. The CBO projects that just restraining spending growth to the caps adopted in the last major budget deal would increase the projected surplus by another $1.2 trillion over the next ten years. If necessary to achieve the reforms and the consequent benefits outlined above, such modest spending restraint would be well worthwhile.

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BOOKS

Progress *v.* Progressive Education

By JON JEWETT

DIANE RAVITCH. *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms.* SIMON & SCHUSTER. 560 PAGES. $30.00

EDWARD B. FISKE AND HELEN F. LADD. *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale.* BROOKINGS INSTITUTION PRESS. 313 PAGES. $47.95 cloth, $18.95 paper

IT IS STRIKING how little change has occurred over the years in the tenor of the education reform debate. In an exchange that is frequently echoed in today's voucher battles, a leading figure of the education establishment and defender of the status quo, Harvard president James B. Conant, suggested in 1952 that critics of the public schools should be asked two questions: "Would you like to increase the number and scope of private schools?" and "Do you look forward to the day when tax money will directly or indirectly assist these schools?"

A prominent critic of the education establishment, Albert Lynd, fired back that the defenders of public schools were questioning the motives of their critics so as to deflect attention from anti-intellectual practices in the schools, adding, "I should greatly prefer that the public schools provide for more children the quality of education provided by the very private schools to which Mr. Conant sent his own children, before he was moved to lecture the rest of us on our duty to send children to the public schools."

And this 1934 comment by a critic of the educational reformers is equally apt today:

> If I were seriously ill and in desperate need of a physician, and if by some miracle I could secure either Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine, or a young doctor fresh from the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, with his equipment comprising the latest developments in the technologies and techniques of medicine, I should, of course, take the young doctor. On the other hand, if I were commissioned to find a teacher for a group of adolescent boys and if, by some miracle, I could secure either Socrates or the latest Ph.D. from the Teachers College, with his equipment of the latest technologies and techniques of teaching, with all due respect to the College that employs me and to my students, I am fairly certain that

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I would jump at the chance to get Socrates.

In *Left Back*, Diane Ravitch traces the long history of American school reform movements and shows how and why they have failed to produce better educational outcomes. Beginning with the nineteenth century giants Herbert Spencer and Lester Frank Ward, this highly readable survey manages to include at least a capsule description of every influential figure and movement of the last 110 years, with the principal focus on the major educational theoreticians of the first half of the twentieth century and their critics. The leading progressive educational reformers of this period, men such as John Franklin Bobbitt, Ellwood P. Cubberly, Harold Rugg, and William Heard Kilpatrick, were faculty members at graduate schools of education, particularly Teachers College, Columbia University. Influenced by Rousseau, John Dewey, and the attitudes associated with political progressivism, their creed, according to Ravitch, consisted of four ideas:

- That education might become a science and that the methods and ends of education could be measured with precision and determined scientifically. This was the basis of the mental testing movement.
- That the methods and ends of education could be derived from the innate needs and nature of the child. This was the basis of the child-centered movement.
- That the methods and ends of education could be determined by assessing the needs of society and then fitting children for their role in society. This was the basis of the social efficiency movement.
- That the methods and ends of education could be changed in ways that would reform society. Proponents of this idea expected that the schools could change the social order, either by freeing children's creative spirit or conversely by indoctrinating them for life in a planned society. The first version was the faith of the child-centered movement and the second was the basis of the social reconstruction movement.

What united an otherwise disparate group of reformers was their intense antipathy to the traditional academic curriculum and pedagogical methods. In general, these progressive educators did not believe that the study of subjects such as algebra, chemistry, literature, and foreign languages was appropriate except for a small elite. They valued training in how to teach above knowledge of subject matter in teachers, and they believed that the role of teachers was not to make rigorous academic demands of students.

The reformers dominated (and, through their ideological heirs, still dominate) the education schools, but were never able to gain complete control of public elementary and secondary education. The opposition included parents who wanted a liberal academic education for their children notwithstanding the opinion of the experts, teachers who cared about the subjects they taught and quietly continued to use the methods they knew to be effective, and eloquent outside critics such

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as Walter Lippmann, literary critic Howard Mumford Jones, classicist Paul Shorey, and "great books" advocate and University of Chicago president Robert Maynard Hutchins, along with a few brave dissidents within the education schools.

Although she views the progressive reformers as misguided, Ravitch fairly and respectfully presents their theories of education, usually in their own words. She recognizes that some of their ideas about how children learn have merit and are beneficial when carefully implemented by dedicated teachers. By all accounts, some progressive schools with enthusiastic, well-educated faculty and staff have been successful.

But the overall impact of educational progressivism on American education is another and much bleaker story. Ravitch's sympathies clearly lie with critics like William Chandler Bagley, a longtime professor at Teachers College. For over 40 years Bagley argued for an education grounded in the liberal arts and sciences for all children, at least through the eighth grade, taught by well-educated, cultured teachers. His reward was to be dismissed as a "hurtful reactionary" by most of his colleagues.

In the 1950s, particularly during the Sputnik era, educational progressivism fell on hard times, as schools threw themselves into the task of preparing students for the engineering challenges of the Cold War. But progressivism quickly made a comeback in the early 1960s, particularly with the child-centered and social reconstruction movements. Perhaps in part because memories of the period are still fresh, not to say raw, Ravitch's treatment of the unraveling of academic standards in the 1960s and 1970s, and the predictable reaction in the 1980s, is somewhat cursory. And she touches only lightly on more recent expressions of progressive thinking such as the multicultural, self-esteem, standards, whole language, and constructivist movements. In truth many readers by this point will have begun to grow weary of the seemingly endless parade of educational fads, nostrums, and panaceas that she has chronicled, so the brevity is appreciated.

The conclusions that Diane Ravitch draws from this history are similar to those of her intellectual predecessor, Bagley: Anything in education that is labeled a "movement" should be avoided like the plague. American education needs more attention to fundamental, time-tested truths, not more nostrums and enthusiasms. We need teachers who are well-educated in their subject matter, eclectic in their methods, and willing to use different strategies depending on what works best for which children. Massive changes in curricula and pedagogy should be based on solid research and field-tested before they are imposed on entire school districts and states.

Ravitch's "fundamental, time-tested truths" are the pedagogical equivalent of Kipling's "gods of the copybook headings." Unfortunately, there is little in *Left Back* to inspire hope that "the burnt fool's bandaged finger" will not go "wabbling back to the flame." The obvious, if unspoken, lesson of this tale of folly is that the twenty-first century also is likely to be a century of failed school reforms. What is to keep half-baked new "progressive" movements

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from again sweeping through the education world? As the inevitable disappointing results come in, the old fads will be discarded and replaced with new panaceas (or old panaceas dressed up to look new). Level-headed critics like Bagley and Ravitch may hasten the departure of failed reforms, but the education schools will continue to be

The school choice movement is not simply the latest educational fad, soon to fade away as others have. Once parents are given choices, they want more, and are very reluctant to surrender the ones they have.

impervious to the unappealing old time-tested truths. And we can be sure that the effects of both the reform movements and the reactions against such movements will be heavily muffled by the enormous inertia of public school systems. At least to this parent, Ravitch and others who share her views are beacons of light, eminently sensible voices; but then so were Bagley and the other largely forgotten critics of educational progressivism. There is nothing in the history that *Left Back* recounts to lead one to believe that this Sisyphean cycle will be broken.

Fortunately there are some signs that perhaps we are not fated to endlessly replay the education reform wars of the twentieth century. Forces are stirring that promise to change the familiar dynamics of educational reform. Parents are beginning to have more choices, including home schooling, charter schools, magnet schools, "schools within schools," and a wide variety of other specialized and alternative schools. And the school choice movement is not simply the latest educational fad, soon to fade away as others have. Once parents are given choices, they want more, and are very reluctant to surrender the ones they have. And having choices ultimately means competition among schools, and a fundamental shift in control over what schools teach and how they teach it from professional educators to parents.

Is it really broadly beneficial to an education system for schools to compete for students? This is the question thoughtfully addressed by the husband and wife team of Edward Fiske, the former *New York Times* education editor, and Duke University public policy professor Helen Ladd in *When Schools Compete: A Cautionary Tale*. The educational system that is the subject of this "cautionary tale" is that of New Zealand, which from 1989 to 1991 implemented market-based reforms that transformed a highly centralized, tightly controlled public school system into a decentralized system based on parental choice and competition between schools. As Fiske and Ladd observe, "Its cultural similarity to the United States and other English-speaking countries, the presence of significant [Maori and Pacific Islander] minority groups within

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its student population, and the fact that it implemented the reforms boldly make New Zealand as reasonable and useful a laboratory to observe these ideas in practice as one could hope to find."

The New Zealand reforms did not incorporate all of the features that proponents of market-based reforms view as desirable. They did not include vouchers, except for a small (and apparently successful) pilot program for low-income students. Individual schools have no control over teacher salaries, which are established at the national level in collective bargaining between the government and teachers' unions. Crucially, the Ministry of Education retains ownership of the school buildings, and will not allow new schools to be built as long as spaces are available in existing schools. This barrier to entry prevents strong schools from adding significantly to capacity and protects weak schools from being driven out of business. Yet notwithstanding these market imperfections, most New Zealand families today enjoy a significant degree of choice among schools, and most schools exist in a competitive environment.

Unfortunately, New Zealand lacks a national testing program comparable to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in the United States. There is therefore no measure available to permit comparison of academic outcomes before and after the reforms. However, in surveys, a large majority of New Zealand parents express satisfaction with the new, decentralized, competitive school system, and "no one wants to return to the old system," the authors note. Perhaps more surprising is the assessment of teachers and administrators: Solid majorities of principals and teachers believe that the reforms have improved the quality of children's learning, and the content and style of teaching. Only about one in 10 view the effect of the reforms as negative.

So why is *When Schools Compete* subtitled "*A Cautionary Tale*" rather than "*A Success Story*"? Fiske and Ladd identify three broad areas of concern. First, they present evidence that after school choice became available, enrollment patterns became more segregated ethnically and socioeconomically. They believe that ethnic and socioeconomic polarization, even if the result of parental choice, is an inequity that state school systems should attempt to offset. In this belief, Fiske and Ladd reflect both the social engineering tradition of the early twentieth century progressives and the preoccupation with "diversity" as the preeminent value that is so characteristic of today's educators. Second, they found that the reforms had a "significant differential impact on the fortunes of many schools":

> Schools that were successful in adapting to the new conditions saw their enrollments increase, and those with enrollment schemes gained control of the mix of students they admitted. Unsuccessful schools, on the other hand, watched their rolls decline, sometimes in a spiraling fashion, and many became repositories for a disproportionate number of dysfunctional students.

Fiske and Ladd acknowledge that this "showed that the system worked."

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The problem is that the unsuccessful schools are "worse off than they were before." But presumably the students who moved to more successful schools are doing better. And the authors present no data suggesting that the level of academic achievement of the students who remained behind in less successful schools is lower than it was before the reforms. Finally, Fiske and Ladd are concerned that the new system, by giving primacy to the rights of current parents in a particular school, and relying on a competitive marketplace to balance competing interests, has eliminated the old centralized system's political mechanisms for balancing the interests of different "stakeholders" in the schools — students, parents, teachers, taxpayers, the local community, etc. Well, yes. One of the features of a free market is that when consumers switch to new providers of goods or services the old providers and others with an interest in preserving the status quo cannot use the political system to block the change or extract some sort of payoff.

Yet Fiske and Ladd take a dim view of the New Zealand experiment precisely because it has proven to be, not a panacea, but simply a major improvement over the centralized, noncompetitive system that preceded it.

Like Ravitch, Fiske and Ladd close with the admonition that there are no panaceas in school reform. One can hardly disagree with this conclusion. Yet Fiske and Ladd take a dim view of the New Zealand experiment precisely because it has proven to be, not a panacea, but simply a major improvement over the centralized, noncompetitive system that preceded it. They disparage reforms that have succeeded in lifting most boats because all boats were not lifted equally.

THE CHANCES are nil that a single comprehensive package of market-oriented reforms similar to those of New Zealand will be adopted in the United States. Our educational and political system presents too many obstacles for anything other than gradual and piecemeal reform on a national scale. Yet incremental changes may eventually transform our schools even more profoundly than in New Zealand.

The beneficial effects of school choice are greatly enhanced if parents have access to reliable information about the quality of schools and teachers. State testing programs already provide many American parents with better information than is available to their counterparts in New Zealand. Two other developments in the area of academic assessment are particularly promising. Since 1992, Tennessee has administered a Value-Added Assessment System (VAAS), the brainchild of a statistician named William

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Sanders, for students in Grades 3-8. All students take comprehensive tests each year in five core subjects, and scores for each student are compared to that student's previous scores. VAAS shows the "value-added" by teachers by fully correcting for the socioeconomic and other factors that ordinarily make valid comparisons of teaching effectiveness difficult or impossible. VAAS and similar assessment programs are attracting great interest, and have the potential to become the *Consumer Reports* of the education world.

At the other end of the pipeline, the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) program has increased enormously in size and significance in recent years. In 1999, nearly 1.15 million exams were taken, in 32 subjects, by over 700,000 students. Today 56 percent of American high schools have an AP program. The College Board expects the number of exams taken to increase to at least 2 million by 2010, and to establish AP and "pre-AP" programs at nearly all high schools. The result is that academically ambitious high school students are increasingly being taught a national curriculum, with uniform national grading standards, making it easier for parents and administrators to distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers and between schools that have high expectations for their students and those that do not.

And so there is reason for optimism, notwithstanding the discouraging history of the past century. The introduction of a substantial degree of consumer choice and competition among schools, together with the availability of better information, will not lead to an educational utopia. Some parents will make unwise choices, and some parents will have more choices than others. But the schools will be more rewarding to effective teachers and administrators and increasingly intolerant of incompetent ones, and more resistant to unproven ideas. American primary and secondary education may begin to acquire some of the dynamism of American higher education, which, despite its flaws, is generally recognized as far superior to the system which feeds it. And perhaps one day Professor Ravitch's successors will look back upon the early years of the twenty-first century as the time when an era of real progress in American education finally began.

The Search for Class Politics

By Elizabeth Arens

Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers. *America's Forgotten Majority: Why the White Working Class Still Matters.* Basic Books/A New Republic Book. 215 pages. $27.00

There is a hint of unintended callousness in the title of Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers's new book, *America's Forgotten Majority: Why the White Working Class Still Matters.* Members of this group, it may be suggested, do

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not need to be persuaded that they matter. Still, one can see what Teixeira and Rogers are aiming at, with the media's eyes glued to the breathtaking rise, and recent wobbles, of dot-com millionaires and other high flyers of the so-called information economy. Readers of the *New York Times* have grown accustomed to stories on the dueling perquisites offered by rival technology firms, classes taken by wealthy parents on how to avoid spoiling their children, and other "peculiar challenges of wealth." These articles rarely offer more than a nod to the fact that not all Americans are fully reaping the benefit of the boom. The question of how those other Americans have experienced the information economy, both in their working and personal lives, has been largely neglected.

What Teixeira and Rogers seem to be arguing is that many Americans perceive injustice in their economic lives and believe that the government has aggravated it.

So there is an important book to be written about the changing class spectrum of American society, and about the grievances and political attitudes of the lower end of that spectrum. But though writers and academics on the left have rushed to celebrate this book — William Greider of *The Nation* has praised the authors' "deep political analysis," Michael Kazin declared the book "brilliant" and Robert Kuttner of *The American Prospect* "exceptionally important" — *America's Forgotten Majority* is not that work. By choosing to write their book as a kind of campaign blueprint for Democrats, Teixeira and Rogers have severely limited its value as a piece of analysis and scholarship. This deficiency is compounded by a methodology that approaches such problematic cultural quantities as the "values" and "ideology" of "the working class," as well as the nature of "class" itself, almost entirely through surveys and polling data of the kind that serve as the bread and butter of political campaigns.

Teixeira and Rogers's argument is as follows: In recent elections, campaign managers and the media have focused on the affluent suburban voter: "soccer moms," "wired workers," the globe-trotting managers of the "new economy." These voters tend to favor fiscal discipline, the incorporation of market incentives into government, and the promotion of free trade. The desire to appeal to these voters is responsible for the Democrats' dramatic shift to the political center and pro-market policies over the past decade. What Democrats have overlooked, the authors argue, is that the majority of the electorate — and the most politically volatile voters — continue to be the white working class, whom they christen the "forgotten majority." In the 1980s, members of this group were recognized as the key swing voters — the Reagan Democrats — who brought the Republicans into power. In the 1990s,

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Teixeira and Rogers argue, the white working classes have maintained their decisive role. It was this group that turned away from President George Bush in 1992 and which was responsible for the "Republican Revolution" of 1994 as well as the subsequent rejection of that revolution.

Teixeira and Rogers offer a theory to explain this erratic voting record. They attribute the dissatisfaction of their subjects to "a disjunction between economic experience and values," these values being primarily work-related concepts like equal opportunity, reward for hard work, and responsibility. This idea of a disjunction, one of the more abstract deployed in the book, does not adequately convey the authors' point. What Teixeira and Rogers seem to be arguing is that many Americans perceive injustice in their economic lives and believe that the government, far from remedying this injustice, has aggravated it. Wages have stagnated, and the skills required for success have shifted rapidly to favor Americans with higher education levels. Globalization has brought new instabilities as corporations combine, recombine, and transfer their operations around the planet. Washington, the authors argue, is perceived to be ignoring these problems while it lavishes attention and financial largess on racial minorities, welfare recipients, and other preferred groups.

Hence, the forgotten majority's embrace of the Republican Party in 1994 was based not on an "ideological conservatism," which, as Teixeira and Rogers use the phrase, seems to mean a rejection of large and active government as such and in principle, but on a "pragmatic conservatism." The difference was demonstrated, they argue, when the white working class dumped congressional Republicans as soon as they were thought to be taking aim at fundamental aspects of the social safety net. Teixeira and Rogers claim that this "pragmatic conservatism" could be transformed into a pragmatic liberalism, were Washington to adopt policies which directly addressed the anxieties of the working class. Clinton's centrist, market liberalism has failed to captivate the forgotten majority; now, the authors advocate, the Democrats must abandon the "New Austerity" and spend the surplus on programs that concern the working class — universal health care, expanded lower education, more loans for higher education, greater savings for retirement, and job training. The echoes of the Teixeira and Rogers analysis in Al Gore's acceptance speech for the Democratic presidential nomination were impossible to miss: Gore promised "working families" he would "stand up" to the "powerful forces and powerful interests [that] stand in your way."

The conservative responses to the Teixeira-Rogers policy proposals, which are only sketchily outlined in *America's Forgotten Majority*, will be familiar to readers. But the greatest problem with the book, and one that has not received attention, lies with the accuracy and depth of the authors' portrait of this forgotten majority.

The passion for polls and surveys that afflicts America's politicians appears to have infected Teixeira and Rogers as well. For how do they go about identifying the "core values" of their forgotten majority? By surveys which have shown "that the American

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public consistently and overwhelmingly endorses the following values: freedom, equality before the law, equality of opportunity, fairness," etc. This is an expansive set of values, to which few Americans would be likely to object, including the very rich and the very poor. These sentiments are hardly confined to the group Teixeira and Rogers

They understand that older definitions of "working class" will no longer suffice. Instead, they suggest a new "Great Divide," between those who have four-year college degrees and those who do not.

are writing about.

The authors further claim that, having been consistently endorsed over the past 45 years, these values have not substantially changed. Teixeira and Rogers do not acknowledge what even laymen now recognize as a common problem — that opinions expressed self-consciously in response to a poll may not really correspond to personal priorities. Nor do the authors contemplate that words like "freedom" and "equality" contain a variety of meanings, and that their dominant interpretations have changed substantially over the years.

Their treatment of "working class ideology," a term they never define, is similarly superficial. Among the evidence they marshal to discuss ideology is the fact that the number of people who describe themselves as "conservative" has risen "from about 37 percent in 1972 to 44 percent in 1996." More helpfully, they provide surveys which recorded people's expectations from the national government on a variety of issues. It turns out that large percentages of the public seem to expect the government to be doing something about health care, poverty, and the preservation of natural resources. The authors then use this data as the basis for the opposition they set up between pragmatic and ideological conservatism.

The recurring problem is that these were broad surveys directed at the entire American public, not just the "forgotten majority" that the authors wish to isolate. Another is that "ideological conservatism," as Teixeira and Rogers present it, is something of a straw man. People do not form a political ideology, or even political conclusions, through an abstract and deductive process, but through an accumulation of pragmatic judgments made in response to specific situations. In this case, it may be suggested that Americans' experience with government inefficiency and bureaucratic expansionism will not be so easily forgotten as the authors hope. The surveys they cite reveal little about what kind of government involvement the public imagines. An analysis of newspapers and radio shows, even interviews with actual members of the "forgotten majority," would have made possible a much fuller picture than Teixeira and Rogers provide. As it stands, their

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working class men (and women) are bloodless sets of vague preferences.

Teixeira and Rogers call their "forgotten majority" a "class," but what makes this different from a group selected at random from the phone book? Class is a term that carries a certain theoretical weight. A social class is conventionally understood to comprise people with certain shared experiences, values, and understandings of the world. They should have a sense of being part of a class, and of their class as having distinctive interests. A strong case can be made that America's working class once fit that mold, if less so than in Europe. But does it today?

Teixeira and Rogers acknowledge that the economic structure of the United States has fundamentally changed over the past 30 years. "Service sector employment has continued to grow — to the point where it now accounts for 80 percent of employment in contrast to goods production in areas such as manufacturing, mining, construction, and agriculture," they write. "Blue collar work has continued to decline. . . . At this point, blue-collar workers (laborers as well as craft, operative and transportation workers) make up only about 25 percent of the workforce, compared to 58 percent who are white-collar (managers, professionals, technicians, sales and clerical workers)." They understand that older definitions of "working class" will no longer suffice, and, to their credit, they do not attempt to substitute an arbitrary income line as a replacement. Instead, they suggest a new "Great Divide," between those who have four-year college degrees and those who do not. "On the one side of the Great Divide, lacking a four year college degree, are the vast majority — three quarters — of white adults who have not fared well over the last quarter-century. On the other side are the quarter of white adults who have a four year degree or more and for whom the last twenty-four years have been a time of substantial progress." The authors provide income figures to support this statement: "between 1979 and 1997, the average real hourly wage for those with a college degree went up 6 percent; and for those with a high school degree, 13 percent. In contrast, the average wage for those with only some college fell 9 percent; for those with a high school diploma, 12 percent; and for high school dropouts a stunning 26 percent."

Teixeira and Rogers acknowledge that the economic structure of the United States has fundamentally changed over the past 30 years.

This information is important and suggestive, but is insufficient for defining a social class. Teixeira and Rogers provide no evidence that education level is perceived by working people to be as significant as it looks on paper, or that four years as opposed to two years of college is as powerful a psychological divisor as, for example, the line between office and manufacturing work. In fact, they downplay the signif-

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icance of the transformation of employment: "instead of manufacturing, the new white working class is much more likely to be working in an office with a computer or at a similar service-sector job . . . But in economic terms they are not so different from the working class of old." Throughout, they underestimate how profoundly class identity is related to the nature of the work itself, the physical arrangements of workers, and the spaces in which work is carried out.

For a long time, the cleavage between manual and nonmanual work drove deep down the center of American social structure. In the eighteenth century, prejudice against manual work did exist among the upper classes, but it was tempered by the Enlightenment exaltation of utility and skill, as well as an idealization by political republicans of the yeoman farmer and independent craftsman. But the advance of industrialization in the nineteenth century degraded the work involved in the manufacture of commodities like furniture, metalwork, and clothing, first by breaking the work down into simpler components to be performed quickly and repetitively, and then further by mechanization. Fewer journeyman artisans went on to own independent shops, more performed outwork for merchants or labored in sweatshops. It is not surprising that the manual worker lost stature (though political tributes to his worthiness persisted).

It was in this period, historian Stuart Blumin has argued, that the manual/nonmanual division became the crucial class signifier. The split which widened between the master and his manual laborers in the workshop was reproduced throughout society. Proprietors removed their domestic lives first out of the shop, and then into homogenous suburban environments. Their homes were increasingly governed by feminine ideals of comfort and refinement. Importantly, lower status nonmanual workers — salesmen in retail stores, clerks in the backs of law and accounting houses — felt an affinity with their bosses rather than with similarly ill-paid manual workers, considering themselves to be "businessmen in training." Furthermore, Blumin suggests, their superiors felt the same way, permitting the clerks and salesmen to board in their homes and join their clubs and churches, which were either not open or not attractive to manual workers.

Karl Marx, a contemporary observer of these processes and the patriarch of the concept of class, drew his boundaries along more essentialist lines. Wrong about almost everything else, he correctly emphasized the importance of the factory in the development of a working class consciousness. Historian Lizabeth Cohen, for one, in her thorough study of Chicago workers in the first half of the twentieth century, has shown how shared experience on the shop floor provided the basis for the formation of class ties. Increased mechanization "narrowed the gap between skilled and unskilled and linked workers in a more integrated production process." Meanwhile, management efforts to diffuse intra-ethnic solidarity by mixing together Polish, Irish, and Hispanic workers had the unintended consequence of building bridges across ethnic and racial lines. Cohen further demonstrates how these ties were capi-

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talized on by union representatives from the newly formed Congress of Industrial Organizations and by political organizers promoting the New Deal and the Democratic Party.

A CONSIDERATION of this history might have led Teixeira and Rogers to be less cavalier in their treatment of class and the changing nature of work. A large percentage of their "forgotten majority" no longer performs manual labor. They are no longer concentrated in the unique physical environment of the factory. Instead, they are located in offices in close proximity to their professional managers or in similar white collar environments. They work in front of computers and telephones at tasks which do not demand as much education, mental acuity, creativity or initiative as those of their superiors, but to an inexpert observer may not look so different.

What has bringing American workers into the white-collar world done to their understanding of themselves, their class identity and affinities? How have these changes affected their political preferences? If this group does share a set of political beliefs, does it hold them strongly, and feel a sense of shared power, enough to compel them into organized political action? Can the "working class" any longer be considered a political unit? Perhaps it is unfair to demand a book so different from the one these authors have conceived. But notwithstanding the salience of their views in Democratic presidential politics in 2000, their subject requires a deeper, more sociological approach than they are willing or able to undertake.

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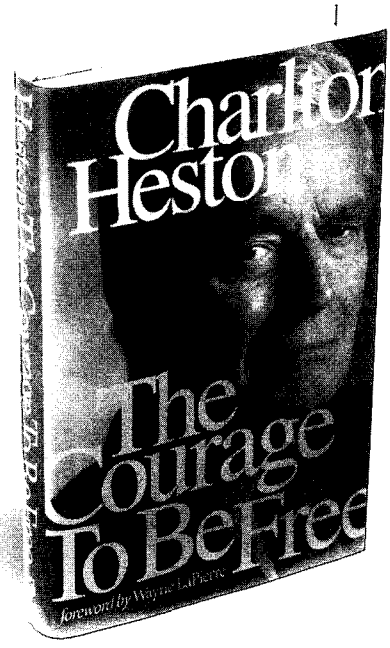

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We Could Have Lost The War

By Woody West

Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett. *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War.* Harvard University Press. 656 pages. $35.00

Commemorations this summer of the anniversary of the Normandy landing have been poignantly appropriate as the warriors of that great conflict head toward final muster at quickening cadence. The ceremonious opening of a D-Day museum in New Orleans, for example, where the amphibious Higgins boats were made that landed GIs on dozens of fiery beaches in World War II, was covered by the press as a national event and with uncharacteristic respect.

An assembly line of books in the past several years also has focused on World War II, with historian Stephen Ambrose several furlongs ahead of anyone with his numerous volumes. The industrious John Keegan has effectively covered that bloody ground. Television celebrity Tom Brokaw published two books saluting the men and women who brought America's might to bear against the Nazis and the Japanese warlords. The reading public's reception of them testifies that the war echoes over half a century later. Indeed, the title of Mr. Brokaw's first book, *The Greatest Generation*, has become the rubric, and a laurel, for the national retrospective.

On the pop-cultural front, the film *Saving Private Ryan* was acclaimed for its dramatic and sanguinary presentation of combat and its guy-next-door portrayal of the men who went ashore on June 6, 1944. If the movie was, as some felt, lethargic in representing the war's moral dimension — a crusade against evil — well, it was boffo at the box office, and it might just have sent viewers to libraries and bookstores.

These celebrations are especially evocative, of course, for anyone for whom recollections of World War II are first-hand. What about the majority of Americans not born when Allied forces stormed ashore at Normandy, but who were born into a world shaped by the conflict and its aftermath? It is conventionally asserted and evidently all too accurately that Americans tend toward amnesia about our history, especially the young. Perhaps this is understandable; there is always a tendency in a dynamic society to minimize yesterday. The imaginative energy required to connect then and now can so easily be preempted by the lively stimuli of the present.

It is a useful exercise, as well as an act of modest civic piety, to reflect on the radical changes in American society since World War II. This country is so different today that it seems almost a different planet — in population, standards

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of living, educational attainment, the spectrum of amenities, and expectations.

In *A War To Be Won*, Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett have recounted the awesome magnitude of the war and its ravages — not least that the multimillions of civilian deaths outnumbered battle deaths by a margin of 2-1 — with uncommon clarity and force.

Their book is not, and is not intended to be, a comprehensive history of World War II in full geopolitical, economic, and social breadth. The authors emphasize "the conduct of military organizations that waged the war . . . issues of military effectiveness." Murray and Millett, respectively senior fellow at Washington's Institute for Defense Analysis, and the Gen. Raymond E. Mason Jr. professor of military history at Ohio State University, deftly provide the historical, political, and strategic contexts without which the global battles cannot be more than martial epics.

"World War II was the deadliest conflict in modern history. It continued World War I's slaughter of soldiers but then added direct attacks against civilians on a scale not seen in Europe since the Thirty Years' War three centuries earlier." They also point to the role that "racial ideology" contributed to the traditional causes of war — nationalism, lust for glory, greed, fear, and vindictiveness. Murray and Millett make ample room for the ideological component in the equation of military motivation. The Nazis increasingly indoctrinated their troops in the cause of "biological" world revolution as the tides of combat began to go against them (even as Stalin temporarily relaxed the tyrannous ideological oversight of officers who had survived the prewar military purges, as the fate of the Soviet Union came to hinge more on inspired warriors than communist regimentation). The Japanese war mobilization as well was infused by xenophobia and "deep bitterness" at Western colonialism in Asia. The vast atrocities of the Axis powers followed ineluctably from ideological fanaticism.

The authors of course address the civilian deaths caused by Allied bombing of German and Japanese cities. "As distasteful as these bombing campaigns are today to most citizens of the liberal democracies under sixty years of age" — and, one can add, despite the revisionism here and there that advances a thesis of "moral equivalence" to the horrors of World War II — the bombing "reflected not only a sense of moral conviction on the part of the West but a belief that such air attacks would end a war that daily grew more horrible for soldiers and civilians alike." They do suggest that "race-tinged revenge may have shaped" the U.S. decision to firebomb Tokyo and to drop the two atomic bombs; in the strategic equation of that time, however, a racial component in the decision could hardly have been more than ancillary.

It is useful, too, amid the commemorations of World War II, to recall how placidly Western governments were dozing as Germany got itself in marching order. While Hitler came to power and rapidly rearmed Germany, and the militarists in Tokyo gathered their imperialist muscle in the 1930s, "the democracies chose to forget the harsh lessons of [World War I] in the comfortable belief that it had all been a terrible mistake; that a proper dose of rea-

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sonableness — the League of Nations along with pacifist sentiments — would keep the world safe for democracy."

Indeed, until mid-1943, the outcome was desperately in doubt. Demonic as the Axis aggressors were, "Nazi Germany, Imperial Japan, and Fascist Italy could not, in the final analysis, be defeated except by fighting. The United States, Britain, the Soviet Union, and their allies had to fight their opponents in air, ground, and naval contexts across the globe. . . . Moral righteousness alone does not win battles. Evil causes do not necessarily carry the seeds of their own destruction."

It is useful, too, amid the commemorations of World War II, to recall how placidly Western governments were dozing as Germany got itself in marching order.

Beyond the resources of war, the authors emphasize, "individuals guided the course of events" from headquarters to foxholes. This is perhaps a necessary reminder amidst the contemporary fascination with the "Revolution in Military Affairs" and the remarkable technological advance in weapons and systems.

Among U.S. military leaders, George C. Marshall, the Army chief of staff, rates highest marks from the authors: He "possessed an austere personality, so austere that a mere glance was enough to suggest to Franklin Roosevelt that even the commander in chief should not call him George." Marshall had an exceptionally keen eye for talent. That eye lighted on Dwight D. Eisenhower. "The Allied high command represented one of the few instances in history where allies truly cooperated in achieving larger objectives. Much of the credit was Eisenhower's. If Ike deserves the accolade of 'great,' it rests on his performance in managing the generals under his command, as fractious and dysfunctional a group of egomaniacs as any war had ever seen," Murray and Millett declare in their pungent style.

Douglas MacArthur, however, is treated as savagely as the English posthumously treated Oliver Cromwell — the body exhumed, hung from a gibbet, the head hacked off and displayed atop a pike. "MacArthur's paranoia, lust for personal publicity, personal ambition, structured and comfortable life-style, and hypochondria were well-known in the army. . . . His emotional balance was precarious. These personal foibles . . . diverted attention from what should have been the real issue: MacArthur's professional military competence. His erratic performance in the Philippines should have led to his relief and retirement, but, instead, the Medal of Honor and a flood of media attention, encouraged by [President] Roosevelt, diverted attention from America's military disasters. Then, having created a monster, FDR and the Joint Chiefs had to live with MacArthur and his powerful friends."

The verdicts on both Eisenhower

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and MacArthur do not diverge from what has become consensus judgments of the pair but, like the numerous profiles that are intimately part of the authors' operational theme, combine verve with insight.

Murray and Millett also give their due to some of the lesser known leaders. Adm. Ernest J. King Jr. is not a familiar name to those who are not students of the war, but the authors credit him with a rare tenacity in leadership, particularly against Tokyo. As U.S. chief of naval operations and also commander of the Pacific fleet after December 7, 1941, King "had one mission: crush Japan." This was a complicated objective with the "Germany First" strategy to which the U.S. was committed. "King was just the man to ruin the Japanese, since he had a lifetime of practice in crushing rivals and embarrassing associates . . . and he had spent his naval career learning from adversity, usually of his own making." Achieving flag rank "improved King's behavior not a whit. He raged at subordinates in public, ruled his bridge with fear, and railed at incompetents. . . . He made life miserable for anyone around him. . . . Yet his sheer mastery of every aspect of naval warfare and administration kept him moving from one challenging assignment to another, despite his personality."

Omar Bradley is roughed up, though less savagely than MacArthur, and portrayed as an inferior commander, quite different from his popular postwar image. Gen. Patton, even with his eccentricities, is credited as a first-rate battlefield leader. British Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery "proved to be one of the great field commanders of World War II. He was not a nice person; dogged, conceited, vain, completely sure of his own abilities. . . . He was rigorous and enthusiastic, and exhibited considerable flexibility; he was a first-class trainer; and he understood the mind and stomach of the common soldier."

On the Axis side, Erwin Rommel was "the premier battlefield commander of the war . . . a leader of men, with a profound ability to inspire his troops to do their utmost in the face of enormous difficulties," the authors contend. "He was also undoubtedly a firm supporter of the Nazi regime; yet on a number of occasions he disobeyed some of its more odious orders." Yamashita Tomoyuki is notable for the campaign in Malaysia and his defense of the Philippines as one of the outstanding Japanese soldiers.

Adm. Ernest J. King Jr. is not a familiar name to those who are not students of the war, but the authors credit him with a rare tenacity in leadership, particularly against Tokyo.

It is Adolf Hitler certainly who is the malevolent maestro in the horror of World War II in Europe. In a profoundly perverse sense, it was fortunate for the Allies that his monstrous pride

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totally dominated Nazi strategy and tactics that, in the end, were fatal for the Thousand Year Reich. And neither in "strategic nor moral dimensions did the generals challenge Hitler. Even in the operational and readiness issues that the army regarded as its domain, it found Hitler oblivious to advice." Not the least of Hitler's egregious errors was his underestimation of the United States.

BUT AS INDIVIDUALS guided the brutal events set in motion by World War II, it is the collision of armies on which Murray and Millett focus their book, the campaigns in every corner of the globe in which World War II was fought. The authors are excellent explicating the war on the Eastern Front, a theater which for many readers is probably not very specific. (In a shadow from nearly half a century, the Russian submarine *Kursk*, lost with all hands in the Barents Sea in August, was named after the city where "the climactic battle of World War II — the largest battle in human history," took place in July 1943). The resilience of the Soviet armies and the willingness of Stalin to expend his soldiers' lives is beyond our ability to conceive today. Despite the military catastrophes of 1941 and 1942, the communist state remarkably was able to sustain an adequate armaments industry, with U.S. Lend Lease contributing significantly when the Soviets were able to go on the offensive.

No less thoroughly do the authors recount the campaigns in Africa and Asia, the climactic operations in Europe, and the dual U.S. campaigns against Japan in the Pacific. All are detailed, analyzed, and fit smoothly into the global mosaic — the anomalies and opportunism of a world at war also noted: The terribly costly bomber attacks on German heavy industry were of limited effect, in part because what equipment losses the Nazis suffered "were quickly replenished by the ever-helpful Swedes and Swiss." The authors also include the absurdities that are indelibly part of war. When the Greeks, for example, were hammering the invading Italians in late 1940, Gen. Uboldo Soddu was to try to save the disastrous day, but "he whiled away his evenings writing musical scores for movies." The gallows humor is also present: During the bleak days in the Mediterranean when Malta was besieged, the British had only three obsolete aircraft left on the island, which were famously nicknamed Faith, Hope, and Charity.

The role of intelligence throughout the war is a consistent thread of the narrative. The capture of a German "Enigma" coding machine early in the war and the British "Ultra" program that cracked it (as well as later variations), providing the Allies continuous knowledge of Nazi plans and movements, has been well documented. What is astonishing still, however, is the stubborn and consistent refusal of the Germans to concede how thoroughly their intelligence had been compromised — it just couldn't happen. U.S. intelligence was also one of the shining contributors to victory in the Pacific, without which the pivotal 1942 battles of the Coral Sea and Midway might not have been recorded as victories.

There is one flaw in *A War to Be Won.* In a history as extensive as this,

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maps are not just helpful, they are crucial. Harvard University Press presumably deserves the indictment both for too few maps and for the fact that some of them, the single-page versions particularly, defy legibility.

From page to page in this superb history, Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett do not permit a reader to ignore the essence of any great war — that, as William Tecumseh Sherman tartly put it, "all is uncertainty & chance." It is only one of the virtues of this book that it will not permit a reader to indulge the complacency of hindsight. There was nothing destined about Western victory. Hitler's Germany "came perilously close to destroying Western civilization."

Stock Market Democrats

By Ramesh Ponnuru

Daniel Gross. *Bull Run: Wall Street, the Democrats, and the New Politics of Personal Finance.* Public Affairs. 236 pages. $25.00

Summarizing his accomplishments at the Democratic convention in August, President Clinton mentioned that during his administration, the number of families with investments in the stock market had increased by 40 percent. Roughly 80 million households now own stock, either directly or through their pension plans. In the opening pages of *Bull Run*, journalist Daniel Gross puts that number in context: "Today, more people own stocks than surf the Internet, watch the hit TV show ER, or vote — and by large margins."

The increase in the number of investors, a trend Gross describes as "the democratization of money," is clearly an important story. Yet Gross is correct to note that the political effects of that trend have "gone practically unnoticed." To the extent those effects have been analyzed at all, they have been analyzed by conservatives. Lawrence Kudlow, the supply-side economist, talks about a "new investor class" leading American politics in a free-market direction. In the "Rise of Worker Capitalism," a paper for the libertarian Cato Institute, Richard Nadler examined survey data suggesting that the new investors were becoming receptive to the Republican Party and to traditionally conservative policies such as reductions in the capital-gains tax.

Bull Run offers something new: a Democratic take on the politics of the new investor class. Gross's thesis is that "[i]n many ways, the democratization of money has led to the Democratization of money." Under President Clinton, the Democrats have become friendlier to Wall Street, and vice versa. So Wall Street has unprecedented influence over a Democratic administration's economic policies, and the Democrats get larger donations from Wall Street than ever before. In addition, liberal groups — Gross discusses labor unions, academics, and

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government workers — have increased their involvement in the markets, and are using their power as shareholders to promote progressive causes.

The Republican reaction to Clinton's success, Gross argues, has been to go downmarket. Increasingly, the Republicans represent less affluent, socially conservative voters, often Southern and rural. They are becoming indifferent or even hostile to Wall Street. By turning away from free trade and opposing administration efforts to stabilize foreign currencies, Republicans "took actions that were directly inimical to the interests of investors large and small." Gross concludes with a policy agenda that Democrats could use to build on the advantage they have thereby gained (though he allows that Republicans could take his advice too).

GROSS IS AT HIS best when chronicling the shift among Democrats. As he points out, Bill Clinton campaigned against Wall Street in 1992, saying that "never again should Washington reward those who speculate in paper, instead of those who put people first." But in the first six months of his administration, such former Wall Streeters as Robert Rubin and Roger Altman fought a successful battle to get Clinton to drop the class-warfare rhetoric and to adopt an economic strategy designed to placate the bond market. There's been no looking back.

"It's more hip to be a Democrat if you're loaded than it was in the 1980s," writes Gross. "And it's more hip to be loaded if you're a Democrat." It's a sharp observation, borne out by Gross's stories about parties in the Hamptons and fundraisers on Wall Street. But doubts start creeping in about his thesis. Hasn't Wall Street leaned Democratic for decades? Gross doesn't deny it; he implicitly confirms it by writing that "the tilt toward the Democrats has become more pronounced in the 1990s."

Further doubts arise when Gross writes that by signing a capital-gains tax cut in 1997, Clinton was "essentially giving up the one wedge issue that had consistently worked in favor of the Democrats in the 1980s and 1990s." The issue had not, in fact, won Democrats many votes, as Tom Foley once complained when he was speaker of a Democratic House. And opposition to capital-gains tax cuts was certainly not a "wedge issue" for Democrats, since to meet the definition of that term it would have had to divide discrete groups of Republican voters or at least Republican politicians. Gross deepens the muddle by writing, toward the end of the book, that "Democrats should stand firm in opposing broad-based cuts in payroll or capital-gains taxes." (He appears to be referring to income taxes.)

There is also an unexamined contradiction in Gross's thesis. He points out that people at the bottom of the economic ladder are accumulating more financial assets: That's the small-d democratization of money. But he also says that those people are becoming more Republican. If that's the case, how do the small-d and big-D democratization of money go together?

That Gross glosses over the potential conflict between the two becomes clear in his chapter on public pension plans. He looks at defined-benefit pension plans, which reward retirees based on their age and length of service. He

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writes, "These massive pools of capital are endowed with attributes that have made them prime drivers behind the democratization of money: political accountability, liberal constituents, and a mandate to seek out investments with social value." But trying to promote social goals through pension-fund investments is controversial; critics, at their toughest, argue that the attempt is a violation of fiduciary responsibilities to beneficiaries, who deserve fund managers who will seek to maximize returns. Gross says nothing about this controversy.

Nor does the reader learn that the trend in state governments has been away from defined-benefit plans and toward defined-contribution plans. In the latter, individual workers make many investment decisions themselves, and their benefits depend on how much they invest and how well their investments do. Most recently, Florida passed a bill giving 600,000 state employees the opportunity to enroll in defined-contribution plans. This shift is, arguably, a democratizing reform; but it is unlikely to advance the institutional interests of the Democratic Party. Workers in defined-contribution plans will promote liberal investment projects only if they wish to do so; and their pension benefits will not depend much on negotiations between labor and management.

The democratization of the stock market has depended to a large extent on the rise of defined-contribution plans such as 401(k)s, which were granted tax advantages early in the Reagan administration. These plans were useful to employers: By matching their employees' contributions, they could give out raises based on employees' willingness to engage in characteristically bourgeois behavior. And because these plans tended to offer higher returns than defined-benefit plans, workers flocked to them as well. *Bull Run* does not, however, attempt to explain why the democratization of the stock market happened, or why it happened when it happened. (At one point, Gross confuses defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans.)

The democratization of the stock market has depended to a large extent on the rise of defined-contribution plans such as 401(k)s, which were granted tax advantages early in the Reagan administration.

Instead, the book lavishes attention on figures such as Arthur Levitt, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission during the Clinton administration. No doubt Levitt deserves some of the accolades Gross showers upon him: Levitt's efforts to abolish "pay to play" — the practice whereby bond underwriters would donate to the campaigns of the politicians who gave them business — were long overdue. And Levitt's advice that prospectuses be written clearly, for the benefit of the

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new investors, was innocuous enough. But it's silly to pretend that Levitt had much responsibility for the rise of the new investor class, or that the SEC has in any important sense "presided over a vast expansion of the markets." Levitt has largely been a bystander.

The exaltation of Levitt is, perhaps, a result of the book's marked partisanship. Gross is, at least in this book, full of scorn for Republicans. He sneers at Bob Dole for the Viagra ads, Dan Quayle for being rich, and Steve Forbes for being Steve Forbes. Trent Lott comes in for the worst abuse: He is described, outrageously, as "a sort of blow-dried reincarnation" of "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman. Gross also takes a cheap shot at Lawrence Kudlow, whose admitted problems with cocaine supposedly disqualify him from saying anything about the morality of tax cuts.

In the end, Gross provides no persuasive reason for rejecting the conservative analysis of the politics of the new investor class, which is perhaps unsurprising since he does not mention that analysis.

When arguing that the Republicans have turned against the markets, Gross stacks the deck. So it is held against Republicans that Lott's brother-in-law Dickie Scruggs has been "growing rich terrorizing Fortune 500 tobacco companies with mass tort actions"; but it is not held against the Democrats that they have supported those lawsuits far more than the Republicans have, and it is not mentioned that Scruggs himself is a Democrat. The economic backwardness of Lott's Mississippi is noted, but not that of Clinton's Arkansas. Gross repeatedly asserts that Republicans "are increasingly skeptical of free trade" — but ignores the fact that congressional Republicans mostly supported free-trade initiatives such as the NAFTA and the trade deal with China while congressional Democrats mostly opposed them. If Patrick Buchanan is evidence of a protectionist tendency on the social Right, as he surely is, his departure from the Republican Party also suggests the weakness of that tendency.

In the end, Gross provides no persuasive reason for rejecting the conservative analysis of the politics of the new investor class, which is perhaps unsurprising since he does not mention that analysis. He asserts that Republicans have lost ground among the new investors, but cites no evidence for that conclusion. The little evidence we have suggests that it is untrue, and that the democratization of the stock market has been a great boon for Republicans. The new investors may be more Democratic than the old investors were — as well as poorer, darker, younger, and more female. But what is more important politically is the change at the margin: These investors are more Republican than

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demographically similar noninvestors, which suggests that they are more Republican than they would be if they were not investing.

This pattern would probably not be much affected if Democrats were to adopt the policies Gross recommends in his conclusion. He encourages Democrats to take consumer protection and "class warfare" (his own term) to the markets: beefing up the SEC, leading a crusade against excessive compensation for executives and what he calls the "options epidemic." It is not an impressive agenda. "Politicians," he writes, "should encourage people to read their prospectuses and proxy statements and to vote their shares." Yes, and they should encourage people to brush their teeth, too. But luckily people have sufficient incentives to do so that they do not need to hear it from their congressmen. Meanwhile, the theoretical distinction Gross posits between "arrogant capital" that needs to be curbed and "humble capital" that should be encouraged seems to boil down to Democratic money vs. Republican money.

The new investors would probably be more interested in free-market policies such as the establishment of an option to invest some of their Social Security funds. This is one way the rise of the new investor class is strengthening Republicans. To give Gross his due, it has also had effects on the Democrats. When George W. Bush proposed this reform to Social Security, for instance, Al Gore had to offer a pro-investment alternative. Savvy Democrats have to pay more attention to the markets now than they did in the past. *Bull Run* is valuable as an illustration of that trend, though not as an analysis of it.

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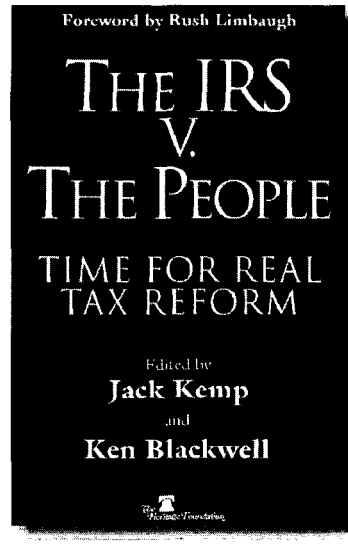
Washington, We've Had *Enough!*



It is bad enough that the President vetoed the tax bill that Congress passed recently—a tax bill that would have reduced our record-high tax burden. What's even more outrageous is Washington will now keep taking record amounts of our hard-earned money through a tax code that is hopelessly complex, unfair, discourages savings and taxes death and marriage! In *The IRS v. The People,* 14 of America's foremost thinkers discuss why the country's tax code must be scrapped. This book gives readers plenty of reasons to stand up and say, "Washington, we've had enough!" Taxes are too high—the average American family hands over 38 percent of its income to the taxman. *The IRS v. The People* gives taxpayers practical solutions to America's tax monstrosity in a handy pocket guide format.

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LETTERS

The Origins Of the Surplus

SIR, — June E. O'Neill's article, "The Story of the Surplus" (June/July 2000), misses the mark in addressing the underlying factors behind the Social Security problem. The proximate cause of Social Security's impending insolvency, and the solution to the problem, lie not in finances so much as in social policy.

In the 1960s, under the mantra of zero population growth, young people underwent smirking peer pressure to limit themselves to an average of 2.1 children per family. At the same time, feminist leaders stopped advocating for women's "choice" between staying at home and working outside the home, in favor of campaigning subtly against motherhood in general. In 1973, abortion was legalized, and the lives of 40 million people, potential contributors to Social Security, were destroyed.

The effects of the baby boom generation on Social Security would not have been a problem had the boomers done their job of "filling the earth" with children who would one day help support them in their old age.

I believe the solution to the problem is two-fold. First, abortion should be outlawed. Second, to provide more immediate relief, we should open our borders to promising workers. Over the next several years, American business will continue to experience an acute shortage of labor, which has already begun. If we do not begin importing laborers in large numbers soon, productivity will be negatively affected, and a demand-based wage inflation will result, exacerbating the outlook for Social Security.

One final point: O'Neill asserts that "future generations probably will be richer than we are." A nation's wealth, like all other economic factors, does not track along a straight regression line, but follows a cyclical pattern, periodically interrupted by unpredictable events that exert profound effects on its economy. We shouldn't count our chickens before they hatch.

JIM HASAK
Alameda, Calif.

SIR, — Professor June O'Neill's "The Story of the Surplus" is an excellent economist's analysis. But, alas, it suffers from a lack of appreciation for those forces that are meaningful to entrepreneurs as opposed to academics and Congressional Budget Office staffers.

The figures she cites can prove almost anything a crafty figurer wishes to prove, but the fact of the matter is that they are all resultants, i.e. consequences, not causes. What is omitted from O'Neill's analysis is the 180-degree reversal of national mood from malaise to confidence executed by President Reagan by his inspirational rhetoric, his tax cuts agenda, and his aggressive foreign policy that spelled victory in the Cold War.

All of these policies led to the creation of a climate fostering consumer confidence, financial innovation, and

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technological advances, which resulted in unprecedented economic growth in productivity, profits, employment and purchasing power. And, the cherry on top of this delicious sundae is the absence of inflation!

A previous issue of *Policy Review* noted the increased respect for President Reagan reflected in the writings of historians ("Reagan Among the Professors," December 1999/January 2000). It's time for the economists to "fess up" also.

SIDNEY HELFANT
Department of History
Kingsborough CC-CUNY
Brooklyn, N.Y.

SIR, — June E. O'Neill's article is well written — comprehensible and lucid. However, I am surprised that there is not more discussion of equity. After all, what good is economic efficiency without equity? In this instance, equity would be both intergenerational and between income classes.

When marginal rates are lowered, they are always (in practice) lowered more for higher wage earners than for lower, shifting a greater percentage of the tax burden to lower wage earners. Our open economy has enabled a lot of people to make a heap of money due to some combination of time, chance, merit, hard work, etc. While I agree that excessively high tax rates can be counterproductive, marginal tax rates (particularly at the high end) have already been cut quite a bit and income disparity has increased. Thus, cutting the tax rate more for lower income earners than for higher income earners would be a more palatable way of cutting marginal tax rates.

Regarding intergenerational equity, let me propose two solutions assuming repeated baby boom/baby bust cycles: 1) Increase the national debt as the baby boom retires to relieve overburdened taxpayers, and pay down the national debt as the baby bust retires and the taxpayer/beneficiary ratio is more favorable. This would be something closer to an actuarially correct method. 2) Like the Japanese, the U.S. Treasury could invest in foreign securities when a baby bust retires and take them back when the boom retires.

I agree with your precautionary conclusion. With all the tales of everyone doing so great but an uncertain continuation of the prosperity, it seems logical not to fiddle too much with either tax or spending policy

KEITH O. KEPLINGER
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Republicans And the Environment

SIR, — There is something deeper going on with environmentalism that David Mastio's "The GOP's Enviro-Rut" (June/July 2000) hits, but doesn't slam-dunk. Thomas Jefferson said something to the effect that there is no area with greater potential for governmental abuse than foreign policy. The reason is that foreign policy is complex and defies the public's understanding. If foreign policy is an area for abuse, environmentalism is a field for criminality.

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Environmental policy combines the dark fields of economics, risk assessment, and complex biology. Humans tend to be irrational regarding risk assessment. Americans are largely ignorant of subtle economics and epidemiology. And the media elites can't love it enough. The result is that environmentalism lies in a place uniquely free from accountability (aside from the courts) in American society. Accordingly, nothing tops environmentalism for its ability to wage deception and bad policy. Not good terrain for an honest man to fight on!

It's a battle that is lost from the start. Environmentalism is a field best suited for entrepreneurial statists who are loose with facts and with foggy delusions of self-importance (Al Gore). Just hope it goes away — and it certainly is fading from its early 1990s heyday. Don't give it any dignity.

SEAN SELINGER
New York, N.Y.

Sir, — Since Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* came out in the 1960s, American schools have been teaching environmentalism. It is a subject much more fun to teach than reading or math (as societal results demonstrate). You can hang up pictures of cute animals and lovely beaches, grow seeds in paper cups, and have a snake or some lizards in an aquarium. There are endless subjects for posters and poems and reports: recycling, endangered species, clean rivers. American children learned each year that the earth was dying, that the population bomb was ticking away and that it was their responsibility to save the earth.

One of the most popular themes for children's books for the past 40 years has been environmentalism. The unsupervised play and exploration that once provided the plot of children's fiction have gone the way of the dodo bird. Environmentalism came along just in time — or children's book authors wouldn't have anything to write about. Endangered species appear on everything from jewelry to T-shirts to dinnerwear. And who can forget the records of "whale songs" and Rainforest Crunch? Look at all the businesses that have been built on an environmental theme — R.E.I., Coldwater Creek, the Nature Company and endless backpacking stores that came and went as people found out that a 40-pound pack was heavy, the ground under a sleeping bag was hard, and bathroom facilities left something to be desired. It seems to me that the businesses that have prospered the most are the environmental organizations themselves, with their impressive headquarters, fancy magazines, and endless tours to get all the city folk out messing up the wilderness. Once upon a time, the Salmon River was lovely, lonely, and wild. Now a rafting trip leaves every 30 minutes!

Environmentalism is largely a political religion. It is the new face of socialism. (For insight into how they are invading the churches, visit the Acton Institute web site.) Reality and science have little to do with it — the new utopia is an environmental paradise. It is a matter of feelings — nature-love. No one has the slightest interest in the idea that atmospheric temperatures are not rising, or that surface warming seems to have more to do with sunspot cycles than ozone, or that the rainforest isn't vanishing. That is complicated science with numbers and math — hard

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stuff — that wasn't taught very well in school. We learned environmentalism.

The GOP had better figure a way to deal with their enviro-rut pretty fast. If you check Sen. Joseph Lieberman's record, you will find the same worship of "junk science" as Al Gore. (See "Ozone Al Picks Junk Science Joe" at junkscience.com.)

I appreciated David Mastio's article, but the problem is deeper and gnarlier than anyone can grasp. Most people have no idea of the extent to which they are just true believers. I grew up in one of the more remote corners of the United States and have long looked at their sound and fury with a somewhat jaundiced eye.

DRENNAN LINDSAY
Bellevue, Wash.

SIR — "The GOP's Enviro-rut" was nicely done, and obviously well thought out over the 30-year history of federal environmental regulation.

I have to wonder, though, why the EPA has more employees now than when Nixon created the agency. I thought the EPA was born because the individual states were not doing enough in (mostly air pollution) environmental protection. Yet today, when the states do have their own programs and the EPA has authorized the states to regulate nearly all federal programs in lieu of the EPA regulating, why do we still need such a large federal presence?

What a waste to keep a two-layered bureaucratic, self-serving dysfunctional system in place. Perhaps this sounds more like a states-rights comment; but then, perhaps it is about time.

BOB KELLOG
Oklahoma City, Okla.

How Democratic Are Intitiatives?

SIR, — I agree with John O. McGinnis's point in reviewing David S. Broder's *Democracy Derailed: Initiative Campaigns and the Power of Money* ("Too Much Vox Populi?" June/July 2000) that one must compare the influence of money on the referendum and initiative process with its influence on the legislative process. He makes the worthwhile point that there is a lesser conflict of interest with the people than with the legislature. The people are not threatened with losing their jobs if they decide to vote the "wrong way."

Several other points undermine Broder's thesis. For example, initiatives are voted down more often than not. Of 10 initiatives on a ballot, perhaps one to three will pass. That shows me that people are showing at least some discernment about what they really want and are not being influenced so much by money.

Nor is the republican structure of government so totally out of the loop as Broder suggests. If an initiative is unconstitutional, the supreme court in the state in which the initiative was passed can strike it down, thereby thwarting the tyrannical will of the majority over the minority. I used to be against these court actions, but I think because of Broder's criticism of the initiative process, I have come to reconsider my opposition. He issues a powerful warning about the abuse of the initia-

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tive process by the majority to suppress the minority.

I used to also support the idea of a nationwide initiative process for the federal government, but I have come to reconsider that as well. It would be very difficult for anyone but the rich to get much on the national ballot, because a lot of resources and advertising (as in TV advertising) would have to be thrown at any such efforts. In most states it is feasible for a well-organized group of passionate people with modest resources to get something on the ballot. The national arena is an entirely different ball game. I feel quite comfortable with the constitutional process for changing the federal constitution, because the process can be started at the state level.

MARK MILLER
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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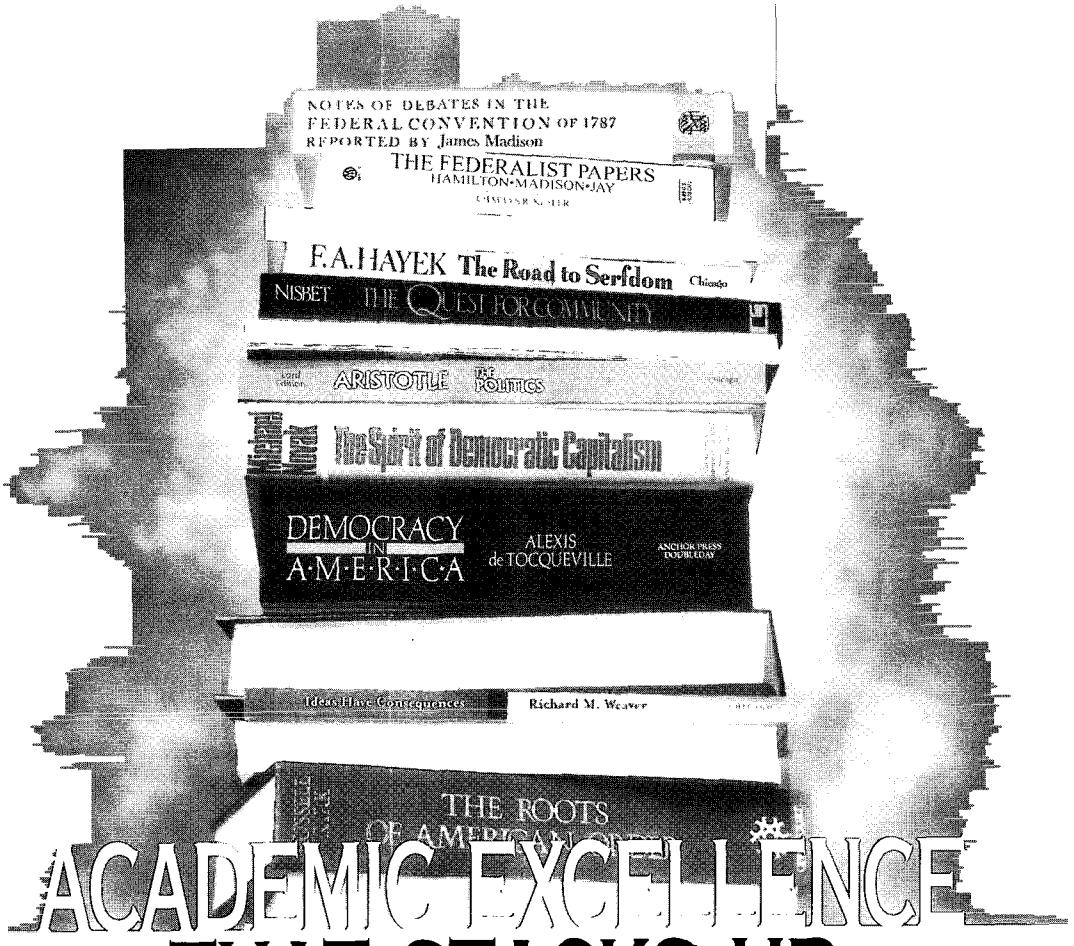

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